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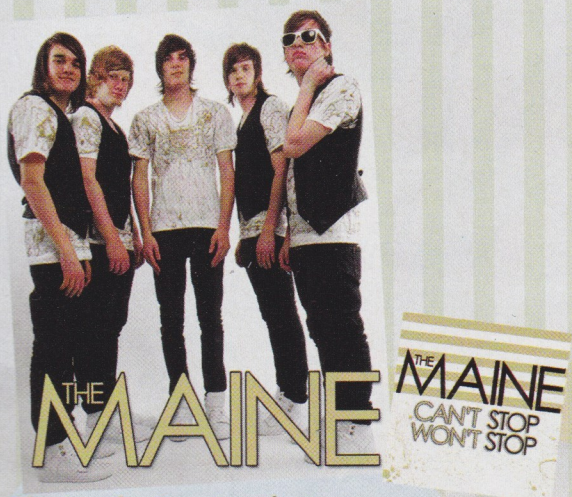
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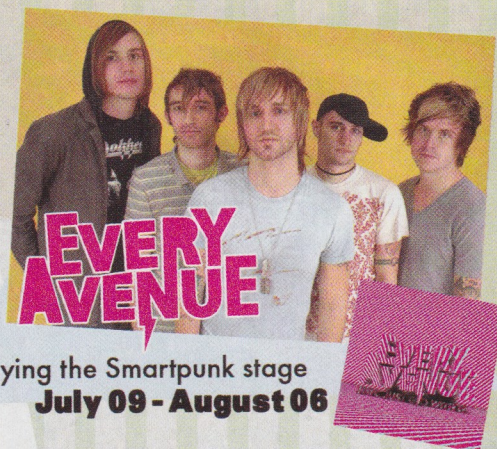
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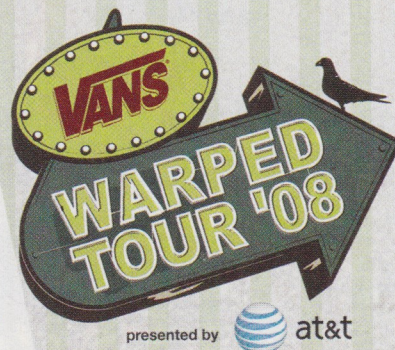
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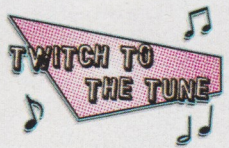


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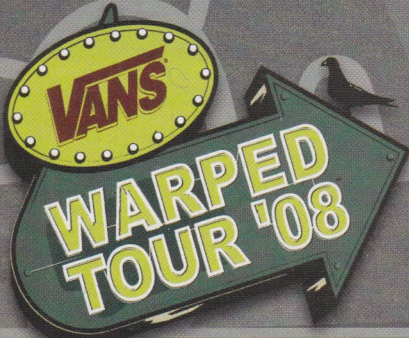
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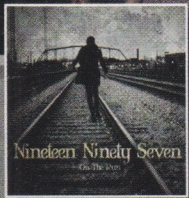
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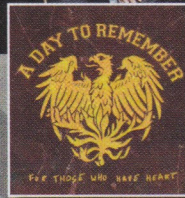
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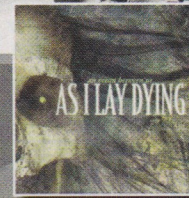
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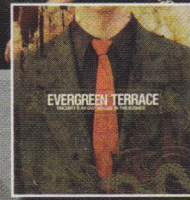
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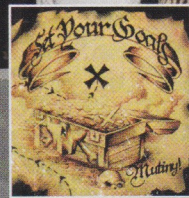
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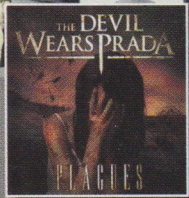
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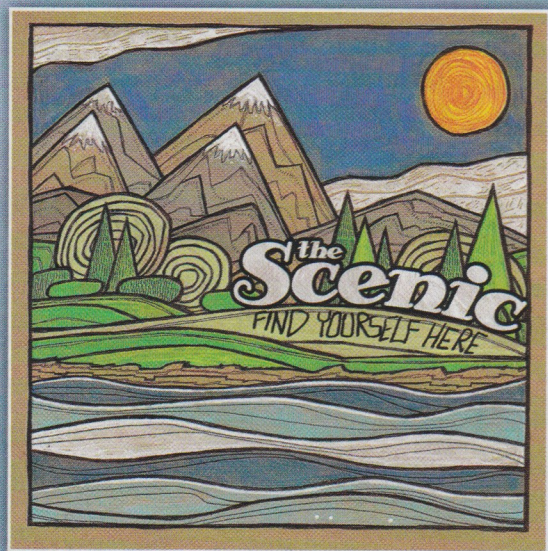


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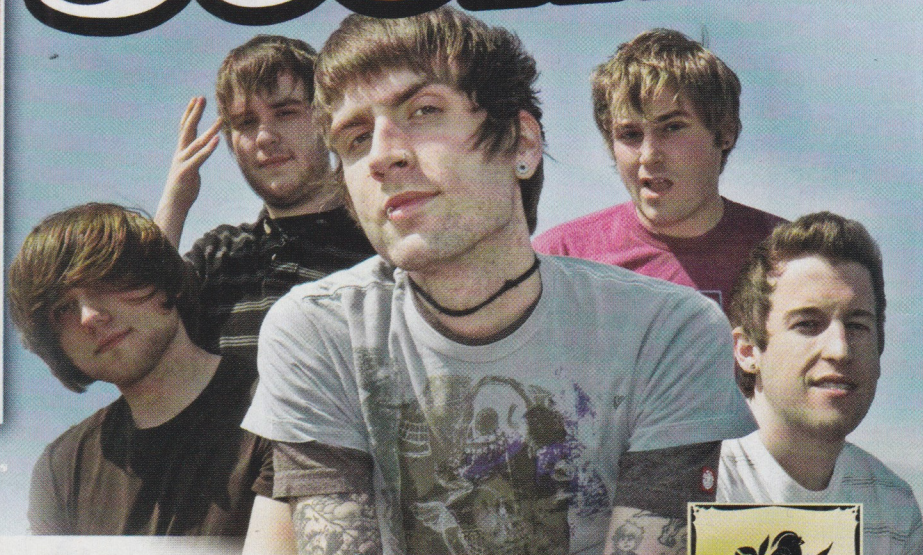
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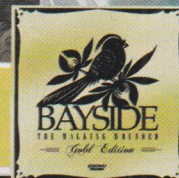


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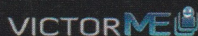
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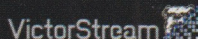
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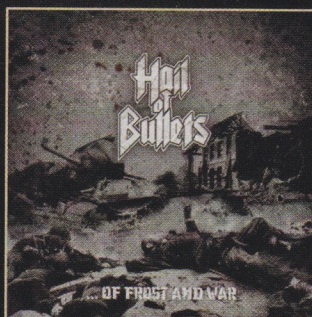
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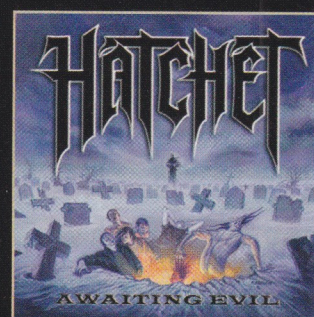
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THE DONNAS

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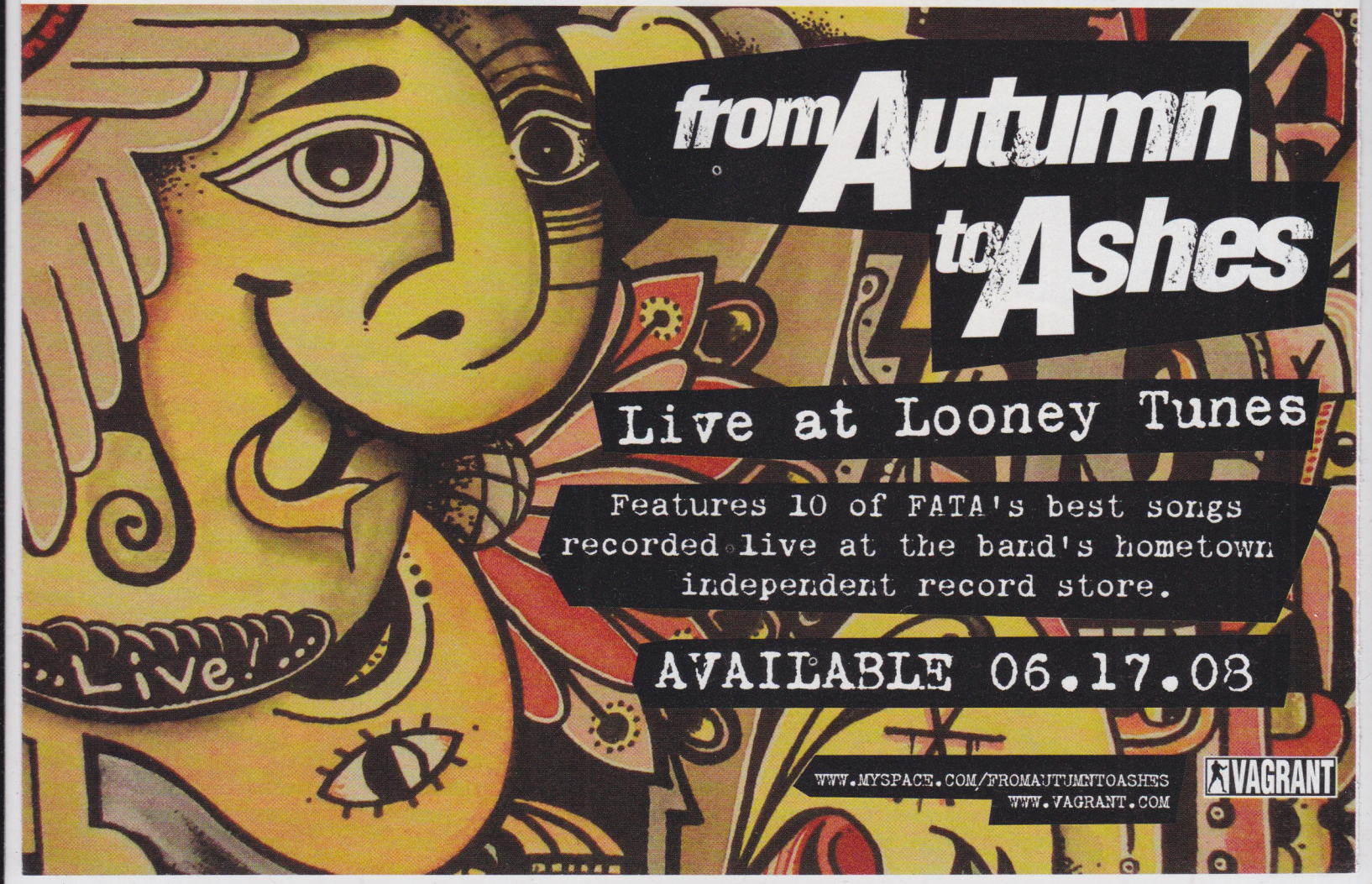


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Correction: The photos of Mike McColgan in the AMP 32 Punk History article were by Adam Degross, not Patrick Emmon?



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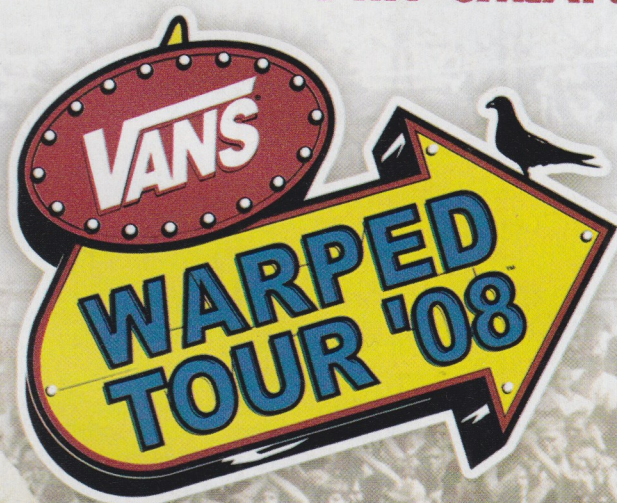
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WORD ON THE STREET

EDITOR: Aubin Paul **NEWS EDITORS:** Adam White & Brian Shultz **REVIEWS EDITOR:** Brian Shultz **CONTRIBUTORS:** News is contributed by hundreds of readers, industry insiders, as well as bands, friends, angry ex-girlfriends, angry ex-boyfriends, animals (hypothetically) and well-wishers of all races, cultures and anthropomorphic persuasions.

PHOTO: JOHN JOH



Aiden parts ways with guitarist

Aiden have posted an explanation for their recent tour cancellation which includes the news that guitarist Jake Wambold has parted ways with the band: "We have been consistently on the road traveling for the past 4 years. In those 4 years we have been in seattle a total of maybe 5 months. That's including time we spent in the studio making the "Rain in Hell" ep and our new album "Conviction". It's enough to make anyone crazy, and bring almost any kind of personal relationship to the brink of disaster. So we all felt inclined to take a breather for the first time in what seems like forever. And with that, we are announcing that Jake W is no longer apart of Aiden" We will continue on as a 4 piece. I know this may come as a shock for some of you, and some of you could care less. I just want to say to everyone that this is by no means the end. This... My dearest friends is but a beginning, a new chapter has opened up for us and the fire you saw before will be replaced with a much higher level of intensity. (sorry to all the people who would like to see us to break up, you can keep on hating another day. Believe.) The band released Conviction last year.

Built to Spill recording for 2009 release, planning "Perfect From Now On" tour

Built to Spill have finished recording basic tracks for its next Warner Bros. studio album, due in spring 2009 reports Billboard. The new record follows *You*

In Reverse which was preceded by a five year gap since 2001's *Ancient Melodies of the Future*. The band has also announced plans for fall tours of North America and Europe, during which it will perform its 1997 album *Perfect From Now On* in its entirety. As for the new album, the songs will be a mix between newly penned material and retooled tracks considered but ultimately dropped from *Reverse* and the the band has moved to to Pro Tools rather than analog tape leading to more collaboration between the members.

PETA2 names AFI, Lifetime, Bane, Cave In, Fall Out Boy members "sexiest" vegetarians

PETA2 has posted it's 2008 list of the "sexiest vegetarians/vegans" for your voting. The list includes Aaron Dalbec of Bane, Adam McGratch of Cave In, Adam Carson of AFI, Andy Hurley of Fall Out Boy, Ari Katz of Lifetime, Cedric Bixler-Zavala of The Mars Volta, Chris Hannah of Propagandhi, Chris #2 of Anti-Flag and many others.

Love Equals Death set to record new full length in August

Petaluma, CA's Love Equals Death have announced that they will be hitting the studio in August to record their sophomore album with Travis Richter (From First To Last) and Lee Dyness (From First To Last, Mayday Parade) producing. The group has been busy touring with Tiger Army and Goldfinger, causing the delay since last summer's original recording. The record will be



PHOTO: JOHN JOH

released on a label to be announced shortly.

Buried Inside plan January 2009 release

Canadian progressive hardcore act Buried Inside have posted an update after a lengthy period of relative silence. They explained: "Despite what may seem like complete inactivity, BURIED INSIDE are not broken up. Not even close. The writing for the followup to *CHRONOCLAST* is nearing completion and pre-production has been underway for the last couple of months. Arrangements are being ironed out for the upcoming recording, and barring any obstacles, a release date is expected for January 2009 through Relapse Records" The band issued *Chronoclast* in 2005.

Disturbed and Dillinger Escape Plan developing feud

Dillinger Escape Plan and macho-metal act Disturbed are apparently developing a bit a feud. While DEP noted that: "[They were] practicing where they were going to walk and when they were going to put their leg up on the monitor and pose, That was weird for us. There are times [during live gigs] where I don't even know where I am". Which led to a bit of defensiveness from Disturbed: "When we do a bigger production, there may be certain lighting cues for certain highlights of the show, but I wouldn't call it 'posing,' just a cue for our lighting guy, so he can add more

PHOTO COURTESY OF EPITAPH



drama to the set. If [Dillinger] sold some records, and were at the level we're at, maybe they'd see that, for bands like Kiss and Metallica, there are certain highlight points during a set that you want to focus on." If they're saying it because they're haters, why? Because we sell millions of records and lots of tickets? It sounds more like jealousy to me. Sort of news. Mostly just entertaining....

Denny's plans Taking Back Sunday, Plain White T's, All-American Rejects, Eagles of Death Metal dishes

Dennys - yes, that Dennys - has launched a sponsorship program allowing voted-on bands to receive free food from the massive restaurant chain while on tour. Fast food chain Taco Bell tried a similar promotion last year. You can nominate or vote for a band here. Along with the sponsorship, the chain is teaming up with Taking Back Sunday, All-American Rejects, Plain White T's and the Eagles of Death Metal to launch signature Dennys dishes. The first of the four bands visited recently and designed their dish which should begin appearing soon.

Civet to release "Hell Hath No Fury" on August 5th

New Hellocat signing, Civet have announced a title and release date for their upcoming debut for the label. The record is titled *Hell Hath No Fury* and is due out August 05, 2008. The female quartet released *Massacre* in 2005.

Ozzfest becomes one-day event in Dallas

After last year's experiment with a free show, 2008's Ozzfest will be a single day event. The show will be headlined by Ozzy Osbourne and Metallica and feature Serj Tankian (System of a Down), Hellyeah, Jonathan Davis (Korn), Cavalera Conspiracy, Shadows Fall, Apocalyptica and In This Moment. The conversion of a touring festival into a single event is not without precedent.

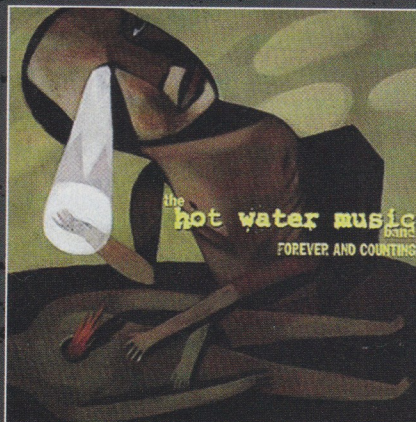
The annual Lollapalooza festival in Chicago began life as a tour before turning into a weekend event in a single city.

Gallows working on new album

Popular rock/hardcore act Gallows have begun work on the follow up to their wildly successful debut full length, *Orchestra of Wolves*. They noted: "It's going well so far, we are writing at a rate of one new song every day so far. Hopefully we'll have alot of material to pick from for the final album tracks. Its a definite progression from *Orchestra of Wolves* and we're well pleased so far. It's all about the riffs. We'll probably be playing a couple of new joints at the festivals in the summer, as we will have finished recording the album by the end of the summer holidays. Might even make a new one available before Reading/Leeds so you know the words." While it is unknown who will be releasing the album in the States, the band signed a four album, £1,000,000 deal with Warner in the UK.

No Idea to reissue Hot Water Music's "Forever and Counting" LP

No Idea has announced plans to reissue Hot Water Music's landmark sophomore full length, *Forever and Counting* this month. The record was originally released on Doghouse and has been out-of-print on vinyl for at least five years. Due out June 24, 2008, the



reissue will be pressed on green, clear, orange and white vinyl. The label rebuilt the layout and produced a visibly improved painting for the jacket.

Dead To Me to release new album in September

Dead To Me have announced plans to begin recording their sophomore album: "As of today, it will be released in September on Fat Wreck Chords. It's written, just need to record the fucker. I personally feel like it's the best thing that's ever happened to me, I'm so lucky to play with Jack, Nathan, and Ian and I feel like we've all written a record to be very proud of. I love them very much and we're super excited about getting into the studio to make this record happen" The band released *Cuban Ballerina* in 2006.

Star F*cking Hipsters complete album, talk fall release on Fat

Star Fucking Hipsters, the new project from Sturgeon of Leftover Crack have posted an update on progress towards their next full length. The band also includes Slackers drummer Ara Babajian and Frank Piegare of New Jersey's Degenerics. "All tracking (aka music, vocals, subliminal messages demanding your undying obedience)

have been recorded and will be mixed at Motor studio with Mr. James McMann in S.F. in the early half of June. These electronically "shamed" replicated discs will end up being shoved into containers with similarly abused art, lyrics and song titles and in one final vile humiliation they will bare the stamp of their unhuman sociopathic oppressors: FAT WRECK CHORDS." And yes, this was basically a blog to announce that we have signed our debut record over to FAT and it should be out by October if all goes smoothly.

PHOTO: CIVET MYSpace

PHOTO: LISA JOHNSON



Against Me! plans deluxe "New Wave" for France and mailorder

Against Me! have announced plans to release a deluxe version of their critically acclaimed major label debut, *New Wave*. Along with the original album, the album will include five bonus tracks, "Full Sesh", "You Must Be Willing", "Gypsy Panther", "So Much More", and "Untitled." The disc will feature a 24-page booklet including some of the art developed by Steak Mtn. The album will be only available at retail in France on Fargo Records but plans are in place for the album to be made available via mailorder to the rest of the world. The release is due out June 10, 2008.

Gaslight Anthem complete "The '59 Sound"

Gaslight Anthem have completed their new full length for SideOneDummy. The record is titled *The '59 Sound* and is due out August 19, 2008. The record will include 12 songs plus one exclusive bonus track on the iTunes digital version. Along with the CD and digital versions, the label is promising a coloured vinyl and 7-inch single to go with the record. *The '59 Sound* is the follow up to *Señor and the Queen* which was released in 2008 and *Sink or Swim* which was released last year.

Claudio Sanchez launches new comic strip

Claudio Sanchez, the multimedia musician behind Coheed and Cambria has announced his latest project, Kill Audio, which consists of a new comic series and companion vinyl figures. The strip is described as a "dark, comedic tale of a man growing annoyed with his own immortality." The strip is part of PopGun, which is designed to be the comic equivalent of a mixtape and feature artists like Mike Allred, Erik Larsen, Andy Kuhn, Corey Lewis, Jim Mahfood, Jamie S. Rich, and many more. The purpose is to combine indie and mainstream comic artists in a single graphic novel.

Gwomper (Avail) joins Smoke Or Fire full-time, recording soon

SMOKE OR FIRE has recruited Avail bassist Gwomper full-time into the band and will be recording with him soon: "So happy to announce that Gwomper from the AVAIL will be playing bass with us. While the Avail camp is bringing some new beautiful babies into the world Gwomp will be touring and recording with us on our new record, and we couldn't be happier. For all of you who wrote about trying out for the bass player spot, thank you so much,

but i'm sure you can understand that we wanted someone close to us to join the family. To have it be a friend, as well as a musician who is part of a band that inspired us to play the music we do, is more than exciting for us. We'll be announcing record details and tour plans soon." The band released *This Sinking Ship* last year.

Rival Schools talk new record, reunion

Rock Sound magazine caught up with the legendary Walter Schreifels (Quicksand, Gorilla Biscuits, Walking Concert) to talk about the imminent reunion tour as well as the band's future plans: "We officially never broke up, we just agreed to pick this up again at a future date, we have been waiting for the right time, we were talking about it and all of a sudden we had a really great tour booked and it just seemed like the time to do it properly. "We are writing but right now we are just making sure we can play the old songs! Playing the old stuff is us getting our legs back as a band but we want to get a new record together, get new material and see how we can gel it with the old." Interestingly, the band never actually left Island Records and still maintains a relationship with the label that released *United By Fate*.

PHOTO: JOHN JOH



NORMA JEAN HITS THE STUDIO

Norma Jean has entered the studio with producer Ross Robinson (Glassjaw, At The Drive In) and engineer Ryan Boesch. The band is working on their fourth album, *the Anti-Mother* due out later this summer. For the record, the band collaborated with Helmet's Page Hamilton and (separately) with Deftones Chino Moreno. The record is the follow-up to *Redeemer* and the band had this to say: "We were able to work with Page and Chino on two separate occasions, and as two of our biggest influences musically, it was definitely a moment having them here in the studio. Page came to our practice space and for the first hour he was just

showing us cool guitar chords, teaching us new things technically. The song we wrote with him is heavy as crap and full of energy--you'll notice his influence. For Chino, the writing was more impulsive. We were already in pre-production with Ross, but the song we wrote with Chino came out so diverse and anti-traditional. Chino ended up hanging out for a few days and we wrote two songs with him. Many bands have guest vocalists on their records, but we were inspired by the idea of collaborative songwriting with some of our favorite musicians. In a collaboration, no one is beyond reproach, and there is always something we can learn and

someone to learn it from."





**FROM FIRST TO LAST
LIVE IN VALENCIA, SPAIN**
PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG HASSLE

WE FU#@'ed UP!

Yeah, it ain't the first time, and I'm sure it won't be the last, but we fucked up. This fuck up just kind of bummed me out enough to want to point it out, and rectify it.

In a last minute lay out, of a last second article, we moved a picture of

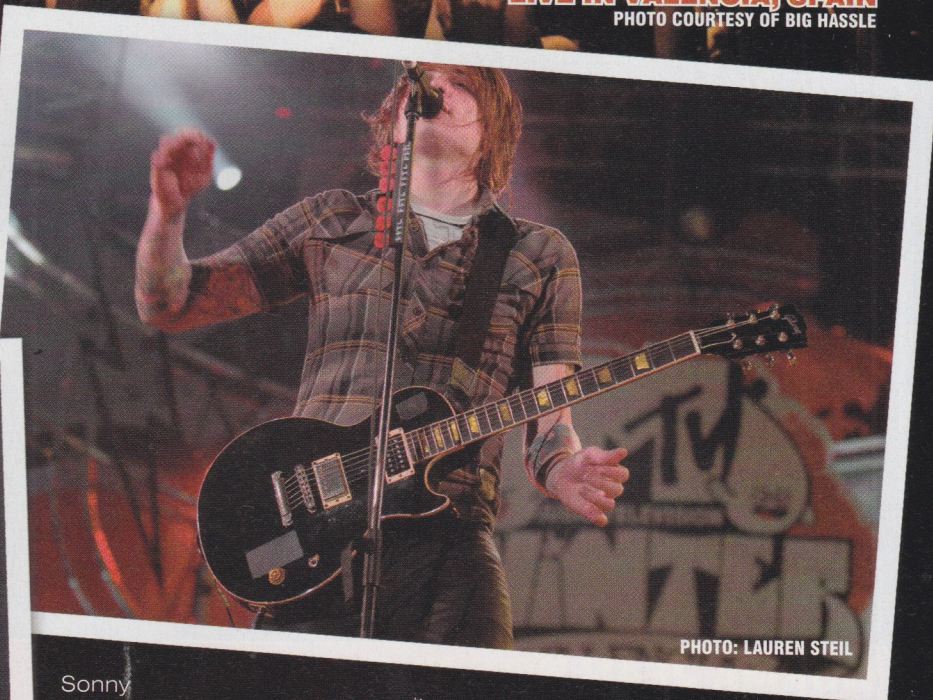


PHOTO: LAUREN STEIL



MATT AND TRAVIS AT BAM
PHOTO: ASHLEY JEX

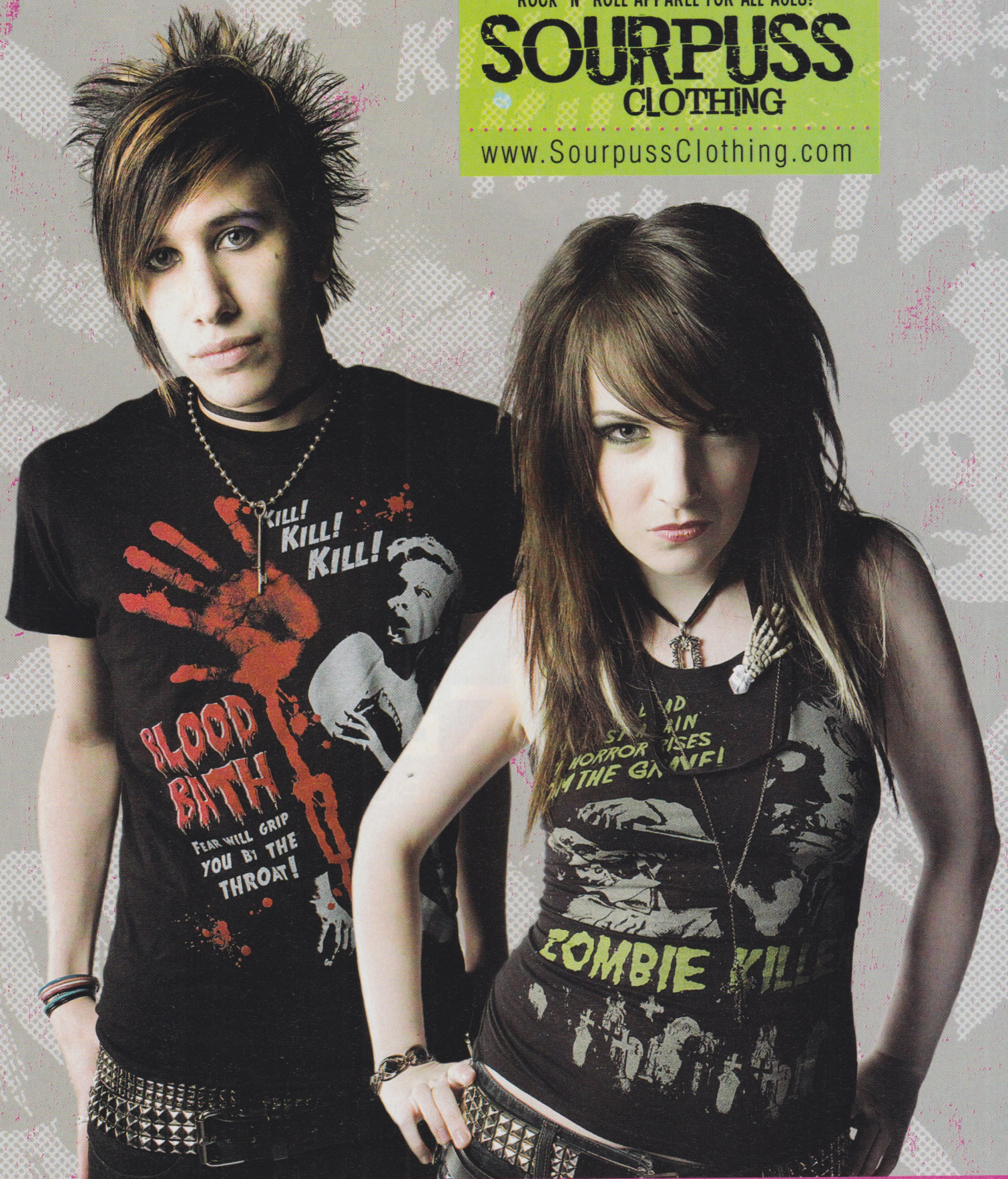
Sonny Moore from the "where are they now" side bar of the FROM FIRST TO LAST article, to the main body that was about the current album. Yeah, shit happens, and it's probably not that big of a deal, and I don't even know if FFTL has seen the article at the time of my writing this, but knowing the approach, and heart and love that current lead vocalist, Matt Moore, has taken to making this band a whole new animal,

it really bummed me out that we let that slip by. Sonny was amazing with FFTL, and is continuing to pursue his own music endeavors, which I am excited to see surface, but this was about FFTL, and the remarkably impressive record that Matt G., Travis, Matt M., and Derek had created, that inspired us to put them on the last cover. Our bad, we fucked up, and I will be buying the first several rounds at the next FFTL show. Thank you for the amazing new record, and thank you for dawning our last cover. See you at the bar my friends...—Brett Mathews

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i hate kate

INTERVIEW WITH VOCALIST/GUITARIST JUSTIN MAURIELLO

By Crystal Lowe / Photo Courtesy Of Glassnote Recordings

So what is the story behind the name I Hate Kate?

Kate is the name of a friend's ex-girlfriend. She was one miserable young lady. One day I said to my friend "I hate Kate" and it stuck from there. I told him that I was going to name my band after his girl. He doubted me, we bet 5 bucks on it, and let's just say I did ok on that bet. We started making t-shirts with I Hate Kate written in sharpee and all of our friends started wearing them... next thing you know the name's in print.

How does your current sound differ from your previous and Zebrahead?

I Hate Kate's sound is quite a bit different. The only similarity between the two is my voice, other than that you

can't really compare them.

What made you choose to move on from Zebrahead in the first place?

Sometimes change is necessary to keep life exciting. I was in a comfort zone and was going through the motions for a paycheck. I always told myself that if it ever lost the excitement that made me start playing music in the first place and became just a job that it would be time to move on.

Your first full-length album "Embrace the Curse" is set to be released in late June. What is the sound on that record going to be like?


Embrace The Curse has a variety of sounds on the record. We have everything from electronic dance songs such as "Embrace The Curse," to heavier, more driving songs like "Inside Inside" that has a kind of

a Faith No More element, to more straight ahead pop songs with kind of a Cure-ish vibe such as "It's Always Better." Lyrically there's a lot of diversity, as well. A lot of songs have to do with overcoming challenges that people are dealt in their lives, gaining inspiration in seeing people overcome them. Most of the songs are very personal, dealing with my addictive personality, strengths, weaknesses, and life as a whole as a gangsta.

So what are your upcoming tour plans?

This summer we'll be touring in support of the release- hitting overseas late summer/ early fall.

Any last words?

We're looking forward to seeing all of you this summer- get your booty to one of our shows, and bring your neighbor. Godspeed and go Lakers! 



the MANIKINS

By John B. Moore / Photo Courtesy Of Full Breach

With three solid releases already out in Europe, Sweden-based four piece The Manikins is probably one of the best garage-tinged, power pop bands you've never heard of... yet. Though virtually unknown in the U.S., that will likely change with the release of their fourth album – and first U.S. release – this summer. In an effort to be the first to introduce you to one of your new favorite bands, AMP e-mailed some questions to Manikins guitarist Kalle.

I know you've released a number of records in Europe, but "Crocodiles" will be your first release in the U.S. Can talk a little about the new record?

Yeah. It's the first one we release in the U.S. At one point it looked as if our last one "Lie, Cheat and Steal" was coming out in the U.S. but that didn't happen due to various reasons. This new piece, "Crocodiles" is the most poppy record we ever recorded and I think that is because this was the first time we really took our time with the song writing. When we have done the other records we have felt stressed about getting it out just to have it out, you know. We have always been so eager to tour and play live but this time we said like "OK! Let's not tour in 2007 and just make a killer record" and I think we did! We recorded it during two different sessions in the Dust Ward studio in Stockholm together with Stefan Brandström, who also produced the "Lie, Cheat and Steal" album.

Can you talk about how the band first got together?

All four of us are raised in the small town Nyköping, an hour south of Stockholm and

during our teens we had kind of a good punk scene growing in front of our eyes. We didn't get to know each other until around 2000 though. I was playing in another band together with Max and we had talked a lot about starting another band with a kind of Devil Dogs sound and then he got drunk together with Jocke and he claimed to know the perfect drummer, Tommie. It was kind of strange that we didn't hook up earlier since Nyköping is a town of maybe 50,000... We all got along great and we started to play in 2000 but with a much harder and faster sound than we have today. We have grown and developed together.

Did you all grow up listening to the same type of music?

More or less I think. Max and me found a lot of good music together around 13 like Misfits, Ramones, Beach Boys, Tom Petty, Bob Dylan and even harder and trashier music like Minor Threat and got really into that. I know Jocke has always been a Misfits and Descendents fan and was really young when he started playing in a cover band that only did Misfits and Toy Dolls covers. Ha, ha!

Tommie is a sheer AC/DC fan and started out playing drums in a fast hardcore act. Since we have been touring some together we have developed a similar taste in music (even if I'm not allowed to play as much of The Sparks in the van as I would like to) and these days we are really into everything from Elvis Costello to the the Spits.

Have you toured the U.S. before?

No. We had some plans when it was discussions about releasing "Lie, Cheat and Steal" in the U.S. but since that didn't happen we didn't see the reason to go there, knowing that no one would have heard us.

Do you have any plans to tour the U.S. after the new record comes out?

Yeah! We are discussing different ways to do it but we need to have a pretty good deal cause we have no pile of money to lean back on if it backfires. We have talked to some U.S. bands about doing a joint tour, but nothing is decided yet. We are aiming at the winter months but we'll have to wait and see. We got some European touring coming up ahead that we need to focus on also but if you are a good booker and you are interested please drop us a line!

Are there any other Swedish bands you could recommend we listen to now?

Of course! You need to check out Henry Fiats Open Sore. They have a new record out at the moment called "Mondo Blotto" and if you are in the faster punk rock in the vein of the Dwarves you NEED to get it. It's by all standards the greatest band in Sweden at the moment. We also have a new two-piece act called The Poppets with the singer from the now departed The Heartattacks that is really promising. They have a new 7" out on Plastic Idol Records in the States. ☛

THE STREET DOGS

By John B. Moore

The Street Dogs have always been destined for something bigger. Their fist in the air, blue collar street punk anthems could fill arenas, but the band's been hampered by smaller labels with little distribution. The Boston five piece has spent the past five years flying under the radar. Now signed to punk rock powerhouse Hellcat and with a brilliant new record ("Saving Grace") coming out this summer, the band is ready to prove to the world exactly what they may have been missing out on. *AMP* spoke with bassist Johnny Rioux and guitarist Tobe Bean recently, talking about everything from the new record to politics.

What can you tell me about the new record?

Johnny: The new record is a compilation of the best 11 songs we've recorded to date. We and our producer and spiritual guru, Ted Hutt, found a way to encompass all of our musical influences and explore new musical boundaries all on one CD. I think musically and sonically we've outdone our previous efforts and I'm so proud of the result. Fans and friends that I've played the record for have said that it delivers the same fire power as our previous albums, but is also new and exciting. Paul (Rucker, drums) and I tried to find other influences for rhythms from crazy British music forced on us by our producer. Although I wasn't super happy listening, the result was effective and we came up with some great ideas! I can't wait for July 8th.

Tobe: I can tell you we should have called it album of the year! Ha, ha! No but really it's an album that we are extremely proud of. We definitely stretched ourselves this time around and showed some new sides to us that we haven't displayed before. Songs of promise, anger, sorrow, remembrance, protest, and hope. I just listened to it again today and I'm really into how Mike's lyrics are really colorful and tell some great stories. I guess it's what the critics would call a very raw and organic record. Fuck that sounded really snarky huh? Anyway...fans will be stoked!

Do you have any guests on "State of

Grace"?

Johnny: Yes, my friend Heather Waters. Heather and I used to do open mic together in Portsmouth, NH and play old style country and rockabilly. She has an amazing voice and now lives in LA, writing and recording alt-country/folk type stuff. She sang a duet with Mike on "Elizabeth," a song Mike wrote about his grandmother. The crazy thing about the song is that when we first tracked it, we weren't sure it would make the record. Now it's a lot of people's favorite song on the record. Tim (Armstrong) actually wanted it to be our first track that we send to radio and put online. That is the craziest part of making a record, what you think is the best song ends up being the worst and the worst song turns out to be the best. In addition to Heather, Joe Gittleman (bassist of The Mighty Mighty Bosstones) has done backing vocals on every release we've ever done! "State Of Grace" was no exception. Joe has an amazing voice, ear, and is a great friend of ours. Ever want to know how your record sounds? Invite Joe, let him listen and watch his face. He doesn't need to say a word. We also have some bagpipes as an outro on "Kevin J O'Toole," and pipes and drums in the title track, "A State of Grace." Ted invited his friend Lorne Cousin to play pipes, and Steve Sidelynk to play marching drums. Steve and Lorne actually play with Madonna of all people and Steve has played with Style Council, Seal. The two of those guys and Ted

have a great dance type bagpipe drum band called Dram that Mike did some guest vocals on.

Tobe: Um maybe... We had tons of guests that visited through the making of the record like a lot of the Hellcat staff, Chris LaSalle, and Tim Armstrong. That was a trip the night Tim showed up. Mike was tracking vocals and Tim walked in and really lit up the room. Such a great guy and influence and gave a lot of great input to some of tracks.

So Ted Hutt produced this one as well, right? What's he like in the studio?

Johnny: First off Ted is awesome! He is very creative, really believes in us and has become like a 6th member. So much talent. On this record Ted and I had our share of arguments. I have always spearheaded the musical direction of the group and Ted really threw his opinions and input - along with his crazy British musical tastes - into the ring. I am really appreciative of it now but at the time he was shooting down songs I worked hard writing. I'm really happy he did now because it helped me tremendously in my writing. A band can never make the same record twice... Did I mention he runs around the control room with a sword?

Tobe: Yes Ted the Hutt was the guy again. What's he like in the studio? Ted's a genius, father, spiritual advisor, pain in the ass, adversary, best friend, coach, um shit I could go on forever. Ted really gets into the entire process of making records which just go's to show his undying passion for creating music. We spent a month with him locked in a rehearsal studio in the middle of Texas just destroying and rebuilding all of the songs we had. He really guides you to look at different ways of writing and performing songs so that you stay relevant and don't keep remaking the same record over and over again. In the actual tracking process he's a real pain in the ass...do it better...do it better...one more time...ok almost there. I really respect the guy though and he's increased the talent level within the band tenfold.

I know you've been out on the road for awhile now. Have you been playing any of the new songs? Are there some that are getting a particularly good response from the crowd yet?

Johnny: Saying we've been on the road for a while is an understatement. We are road warriors! We've played "Mean Fist" and "Kevin J O'Toole" live for the last tour and they went over great! Particularly "Kevin J O'Toole." People can really identify with stories of lost family members. That's my favorite new live song, at least until we start playing "2 Angry Kids"...

Tobe: Yeah! We were just out with Anti Flag and we rotated three different tracks through the set. "Kevin J. O'Toole," "Mean Fist" and "General's Boombox." I was so blown away to see kids setting it off and even attempting to sing the choruses. It's always a weird moment when you debut new songs because you expect minimal response as kids wrap their heads around your new songs, but this time it felt like we had been playing those songs for years.

Johnny, I remember hearing about the seizure you had on stage last year. Are you doing ok now?

Johnny: I did, and thank you for asking about my well being. That was a really scary night. It happened on the fourth song of our set in Omaha, NE on the Flogging Molly tour. I don't remember anything except coming to with a medic standing over me with a needle in the dressing room. Tobe was yelling for me to go to the emergency room but I told him I'd go after we played. When he told me we'd already played, that I had a seizure, and I saw our gear being loaded off stage, I knew I had to go to the hospital. Apparently, there were some firefighters that jumped the barricade to help resuscitate me and I'm eternally grateful to them. We had been (and still are) touring relentlessly and exhaustion was a factor. I see a vacation in my near future!

Tobe: That was a horrific moment for me. I was standing next to him and realized his playing was really off. I looked over at him and expected to see him laugh as we do when we fuck up but instead he looked really odd. I grabbed a hold of him and he collapsed and we both went down. My first instinct was that we were getting electrocuted and our tech thought the same thing and was trying to rip the guitars off of us. We are still not sure what caused it but just to be safe we have a strict no strobe policy now. I'm probably more sensitive to it and freak out on lighting guys because Rioux doesn't remember it. It was awful. But after all that, he was onstage the next night and finished a grueling five-week winter tour without letting up.

How did the signing with Hellcat come about?

Johnny: Hellcat has been our goal and

dream since 2003. We are still pinching ourselves! Chris LaSalle of Hellcat has been a friend of mine for a while and a strong advocate and fan of ours. Tim and the Rancid guys have always been in our corner as well. It couldn't happen in the past for various reasons but the stars aligned and contracts ran out so here we are! It is the best and most natural home for us. The staff of that label is second to none. We are finally no longer doing this ourselves and are part of a really great musical community.

Tobe: When our contract with our former label was up we just received a phone call from a friend who was associated with the label and asked what was next for Street Dogs. We informed him that more records and more tours and he simply said well you should be with Hellcat. Next time in LA, we had lunch with Chris LaSalle and Brett Gurewitz and a few months later we were starting to work on "State of Grace." It's been really laid back and natural working with them and so far they have hit nothing but home runs for us. I couldn't think of any better label to be with.

You guys have not shied away from writing political songs in the past. With this being an election year, do you plan on using your shows to encourage kids to vote or get more involved politically?

Johnny: We've always been political from an autobiographical and lyrical sense, but we have never shoved our views down a person's throat and want it to stay that way. I think people know we are anti-war and pro-labor, so that automatically makes us lefties. We are certainly going to continue to encourage voting and being active for change. Probably more so this year. It is an exciting and optimistic time to be an American. That being said, we will keep to the idea that we are musicians and are no more qualified to preach than the guy making cappuccinos at Starbucks.

Tobe: You know this record is not quite as political as "Fading American Dream." I think we have always conveyed our political views but also never forced an opinion. I can sit at the merch booth all night and tell kids the current administration is doing nothing but wrecking our country and smearing our reputation abroad, but I'm

not a lobbyist or a figure on a news channel. I prefer to talk about the issues and let kids find their way to what's going on. Being an election year we definitely have some plans to get our fans politically involved, most importantly getting registered and voting! There is a real excitement amongst young kids this time and they know they have the power to do something special and get their voices heard. Being a political band you have to let your fans have some victories and hope or they just get tired of hearing a bunch of preaching and contradictions.


Do you consider yourself pretty politically aware?

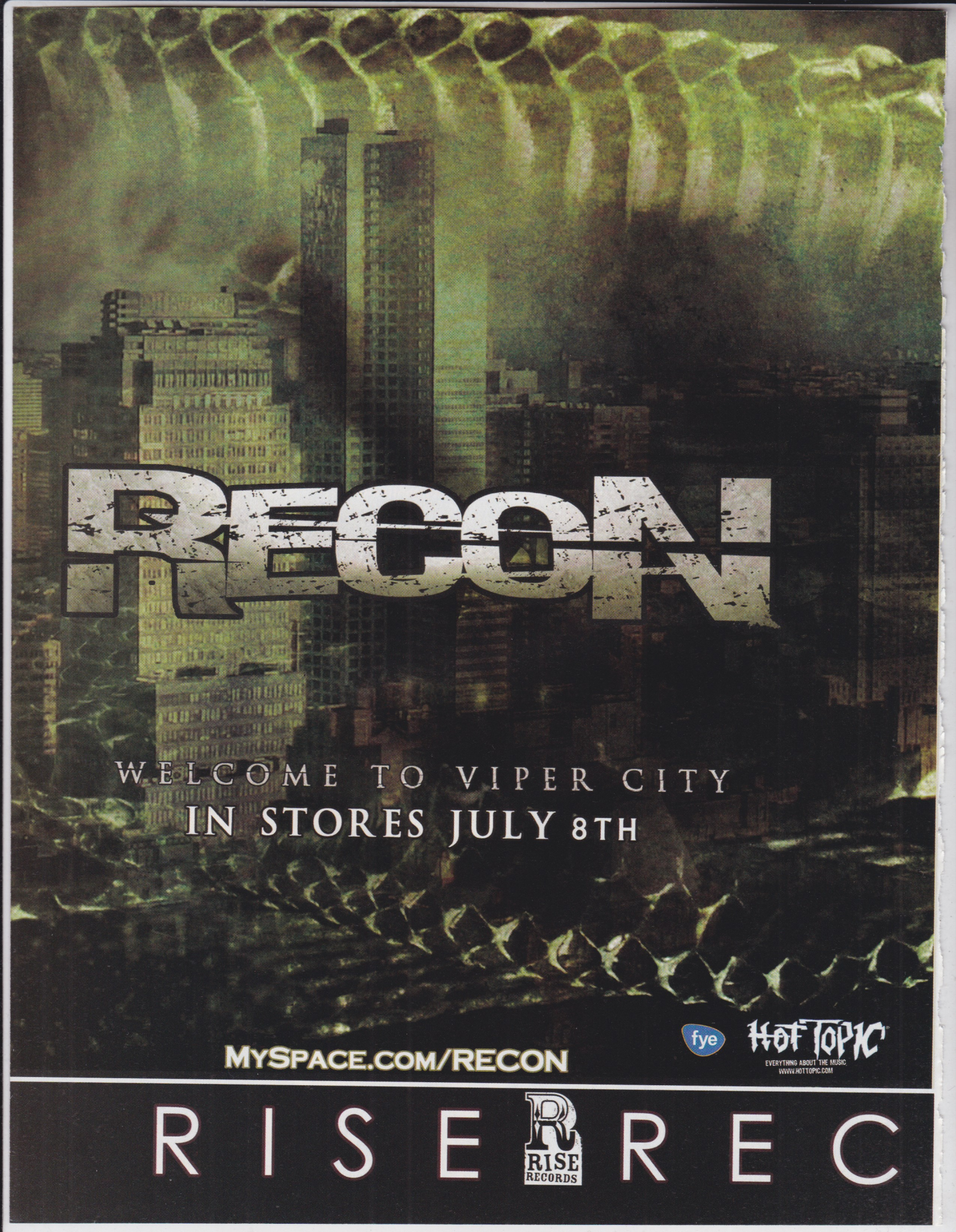
Johnny: Very much so. Personally speaking, I'm tired of the constant media attempts at brainwashing. Ask questions... dig for the truth.

Tobe: Absolutely! I live and breathe what's going on in the political arena in the US and abroad.

What's next for the band after the record comes out?

Johnny: Touring some more. We are going to try to become more "international" on this record. We've been to Europe several times and Japan once but I wanna hit Hawaii, Australia, Alaska, China, South America and so on. We have a label that can sell records finally. We are going to take full advantage of it. I also need more stories to tell my grandkids while in my rocking chair.

Tobe: Well the record drops July 8 while we are on the Warped tour. Right after Warped Tour we will be heading out on a full headlining tour! That's right kiddos...you get to see us for more than 45 minutes. We will be taking out Time Again, Flatfoot 56, and some great regional/local acts...supporting the local scene! We also are making our back to Europe in Nov/Dec and then our annual "Wreck the Halls!" show in Boston at Xmas time. 



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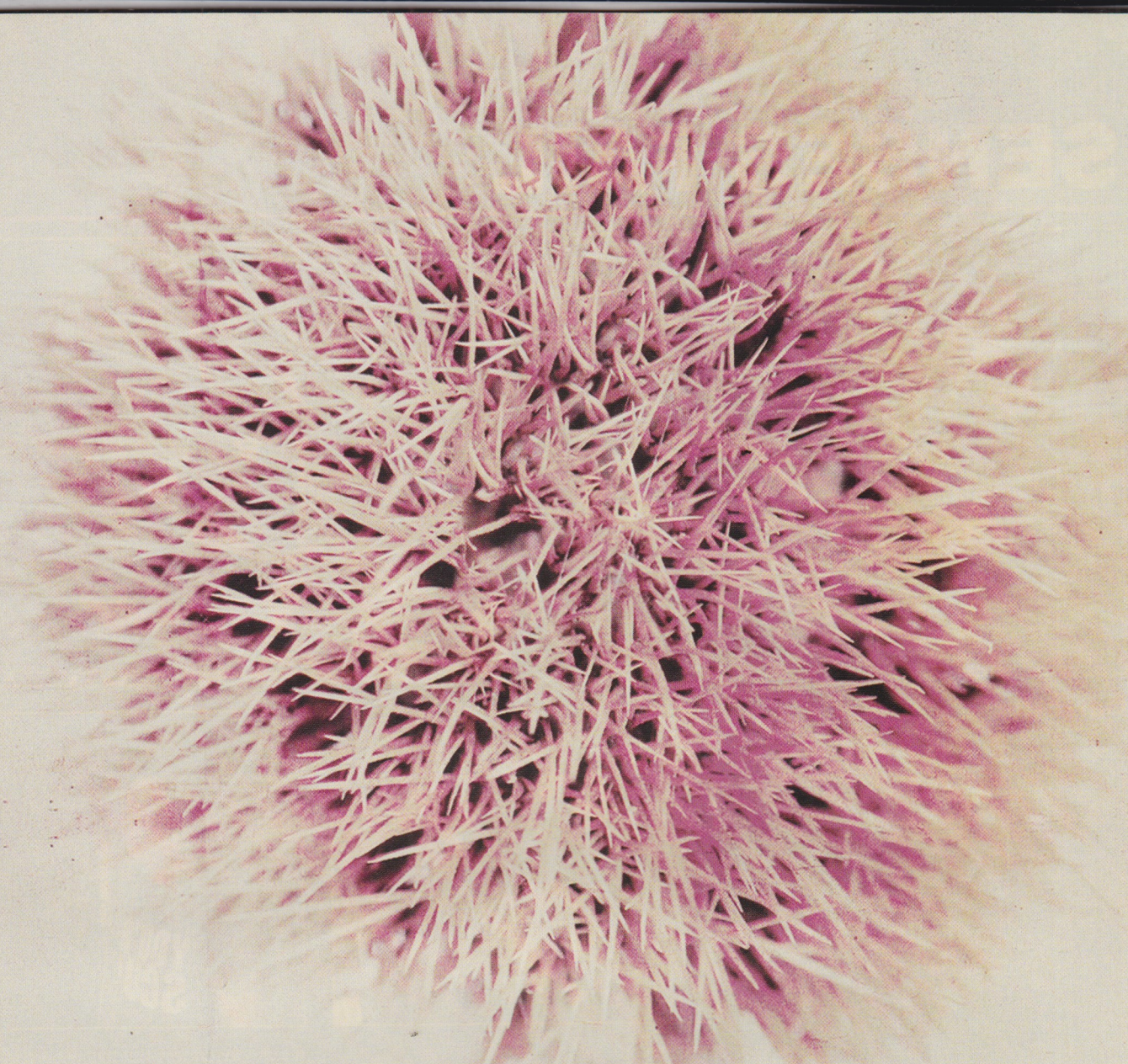
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IN THE STUDIO WITH: SENSES FAIL



Garrett:

I don't remember when we actually sat down and began the "Official LP3 Writing Session." We finished our co-headlining tour with New Found Glory in December '07 and sometime between then and late January of this year we started getting in to the swing of things. The holiday season is usually our real vacation, so we take advantage of it and for a few weeks try to forget what we do for a living.

Anyway, I think we started writing closer to February. The at-home-writing process, this time around, was a different approach from last time. We still did Monday through Friday starting at noon, but rather than playing through Line6 Pods, V-Drums, and studio monitors, we were doing a more live-oriented writing session.

We returned to my basement, where we recorded *Still Searching* and set up our in-ear monitor rig, mic'd all the instruments, and setup a mix to be sent from the board to our Pro Tools rig. We all stood, facing each other, in an unfinished basement in the middle of the winter and started jamming. I don't think the basement got any warmer than 45 degrees.

Once we had everything setup it was time to start, but we didn't have much to start with. So, it took us a good week to get the juices flowing. After we got a couple songs finished, we started to get a handle on (or so we thought) where we were going with this album. We would hit record in Pro Tools and capture whatever we came up with, come back the next day and try to solidify the ideas. When we had a solid structure for the song at hand, we would then record it live, bounce it from Pro Tools down to an MP3, e-mail it to ourselves for home listening. If the song wasn't completely solid after listening back at home, someone would come back to practice within the next few days with their suggestions. From there we would repeat



the same process.

On February 18th, we decided to make a trip down to Baltimore for a week to show Brian McTernan our progress. We setup the exact same way we had in my basement, only this time it was a real studio, the studio where we would ultimately be making the album. We played the songs while Brian sat in the control room, listened and recorded. We tweaked the few that were agreed to be the staples among the 8 or so songs we came down with and finally had solid direction for writing this album.

Soon after touching base with Brian, we hit a wall at home. Towards the end of March we lost steam and needed a scene change. Nothing good was coming out of our 4 or 5 hour jam sessions. Thankfully, we were scheduled to go into the studio on April 1st.

Buddy:

Driving down to Baltimore on April 1, 2008 I almost died about four times. A U-haul box truck could have been my coffin and the New Jersey Turnpike my grave. Fortunately, I was spared by the highway gods. It was a pretty perfect way to start off the recording of our new record because those events in



a way describe what this record is about.

We showed up with: bright smiles, an un-healthy appetite for beer, (which is a perfect match for Baltimore), a ton of gear, some of which we won't even use and about 12 songs to be recorded.

Now it's April 24th and the last 23 days have been spent writing, re-writing, un-re-writing songs and creating something out of nothing. At this point in the process it is hard to say what we have and don't have.

Out of the 12 songs we came in with, eight that have survived the Guts "Do you have it?" challenge. We plan to record 15 songs, of which 7 were either re-worked out of the scraps of old songs or created out of thin air.

I would have to say the hardest part of recording is the actual writing process. Sometimes, the ideas all come at once and other times they arrive in small amounts. It starts to get hard when you have a collection of tunes, but there are one or two missing from the big picture and you have to dig around in your collective unconscious for inspiration. Most times the ones that are the hardest to get are the real gems.

Working with Brian, who did our last effort "*Still Searching*", is a real treat. The



man has a smile as wide as the equator and an infectious laughter reminiscent of Dom DeLuise.

We set up shop in Fells Point, which is an area near the inner harbor of downtown Baltimore. The slogan for Fells Point is, "If you lived here you'd already be drunk!" and is quite the opposite of where we recorded our last record, which was done in Woodstock, NY. The approach this time was vastly different from Still Searching because for the latter we made demos of each song and went into the studio with extremely concrete ideas.

As for this time, we got the songs to a good place, then tried to keep on writing

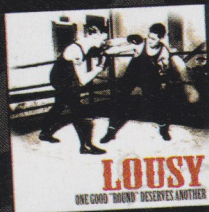
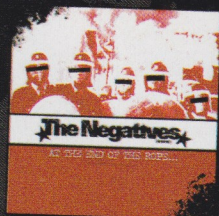
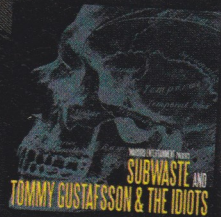
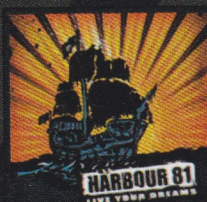
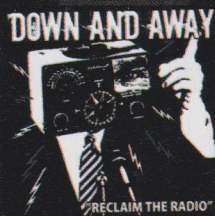
as much as possible and sort the details out later. Another difference is we no longer have our old bass player, having left the band prior to the writing process we wrote most of this record as a four piece. Our good friend and colleague Jason Black (Hot Water Music, The Draft) joined forces with us in January to play a show. We were so blown away by his greatness that we asked him if he would add his expertise and to our happiness he accepted.

Jason has been an invaluable addition to Senses Fail, adding ideas, jokes and more beer. We are very excited for him to start laying down the low tone.

We have a lot more time to get this done than previous releases. All our other records have either been done in days or about 6 weeks and this process will take us from April 1 to June 1. There is an overall freedom this go around that stems from new blood, extended time and lack for expectations.

This record will be whatever it lets itself be as we are not trying to write it, but gently coax it to fruition. Lyrically it will be about letting go of the person you used to be, moving on to the next stage in life, losing love, finding love inside yourself and the struggle to find your place in the world as a hopeful happy human being. ☞

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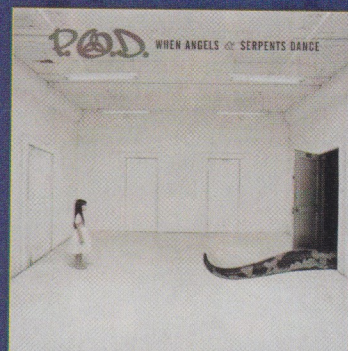
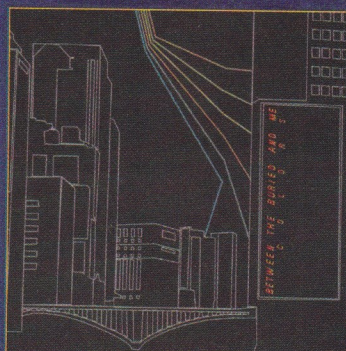
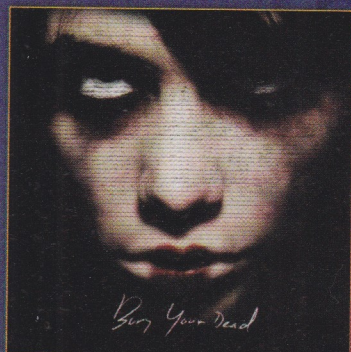
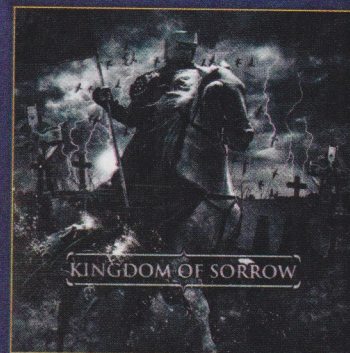
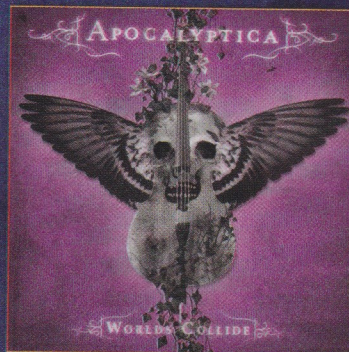
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UNDEROATH



I feel that once Timmy took his braces off the band got a lot less metal. WTF?

Yeah, I don't know man. It's weird cause Tim had his braces on *They're Only Chasing Safety* which I think really made that the most metal record ever recorded. Then he lost the metal in his face and we lost it in the music, making the ultimate "radio-pop" record ever, *Define The Great Line*...way to call us out bro, touché!

How sick are my skills?

The illest bro! No one can say "that's what she said" more times to their own self in a recording session than you. You set the bar my friend and continue to raise it. Thanks for pushing our tolerance levels further than we ever thought they could go.

If you were at an all you can eat steak

place like Fogo De Chao and they served human, would you eat it?

Nah, I'm more of a whale and horse kinda guy. I like the exotic stuff.

Why is it I shit in my pants every time I do one of your records?

It probably has to do with the massive amounts of spicy Indian cuisine you consume mixed with the fact that you have a desperate need for attention and the oddest ways of getting it. It's ok though, there's always next time right? Depends anyone?

Why don't you guys have a black dude in the band? I have one! You must be racist!!!

We had one, his name was Ocavio. He's what kept us metal. Once he left, so did the "black metal" influence. Bummer dude.

So you're from Florida...how can you be comfortable living in a state that looks like a flaccid penis?

You mean the one with warm weather, beaches, no harsh accents and sweet tea? Yeah I think we're comfortable with it, having fun shoveling your driveway this winter!

Do you guys ever get up in the morning and flex in the mirror and say 'this is who I am?' Because I do!

No, I have a picture of you flexing taped to my mirror. I flex to you, flex for you, I flex with you! I hope that was creepy enough for you.

If you had a super power would you rather have laser eyes, lightning fingers, or projectile diarrhea?

Projectile diarrhea of course.

ME FIRST & THE GIMME GIMMES

THE OTHER BALL FINALLY DROPS!

By Brett Mathews / Photography By Scott Cole

Me First And The Gimme Gimmes are up to their old hijinks with the release of their 7th full length, *Have Another Ball*. In order to commemorate the 10th anniversary of their debut album, *Have a Ball*, the GIMMES are releasing the second installment of recordings from the original session. Wait, say what?!? Yes, the wildly popular *Have a Ball* was initially recorded as a double album, but the band decided that the two-disc extravaganza might be too much rock for the uninitiated masses. Subsequently, there is another album's worth of material just waiting to be devoured by Gimmes fans, old and new. *Have Another Ball* is chock-full of 70's classics from the likes of John Denver, Hall and Oates, Neil Diamond, and Elton John, with that distinctive GIMME GIMMES twist.

We recently caught up with one of the sweetest voices, and hind-ends, in all of Punk Rock's history, Sir Spike Slawson, amidst his frantic karaoke set at his favorite SF watering hole. We mighta' oughta' have talked a few drinks earlier, but then you wouldn't have gotten a 'real' Gimmes interview...

So, this is the other half of what was going to be the debut double album of ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES. Why was it released as a single album, and why wait a decade for the other half to drop?

We just never got around to it?... We were playing possum?... A cynical ploy to distract people from the smell of rotting horse?... Our methods remain a mystery even to ourselves.

Are any of the songs on this album from the B-Sides of the singles from the first album?

You're asking if this is a B-sides record, right?! I resent the implication, and the answer is maybe! These are simply songs which, like cheese, have gotten stronger with age.

I know a song or two from this was on a Japanese CD I have from Pizza of Death Records from many years ago. What was that, and how did that come about?

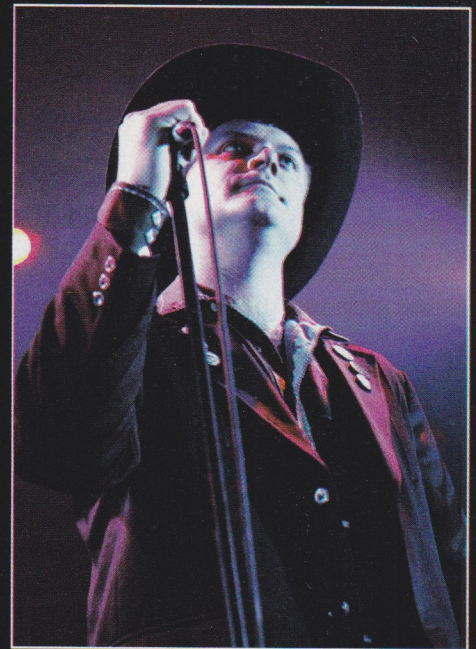
I believe in our new global economy it is called dumping.

Is playing other peoples songs, but just faster, and getting paid well for it, the real "greatest Rock & Roll swindle"?

Put it this way, the harder I work the less money I make.

Have you been to any good baseball games in Pittsburgh lately?

No, I have not even been back to Pittsburgh since the "incident". Most



baseball fans are fucking jagoffs, anyway. Especially the white flight shitheads who drive obliviously through unspeakable dysfunction and squalor to make their money in the rotting city and bring it back out to their pristine, low-tax, lily-white suburbs. I can't wait 'till gas is \$10 a gallon. What're they gonna do, walk 15 miles to the store for a loaf of bread? No, then they'll wanna move back in to the city, and they'll just price everybody who's already there out to the suburbs, which by that time will be dilapidated ghettos themselves. God damn America! On the subject of sports I agree with Kevin Seconds. (Go Pens!) I am not a crank.

As a band how do you guys choose what songs you cover?

As a band, Mike decides.

Out of all the Costumes you guys have ever worn, which one has been your favorite to wear?

I gotta go with cowboy. It feels at once subversive and traditional.

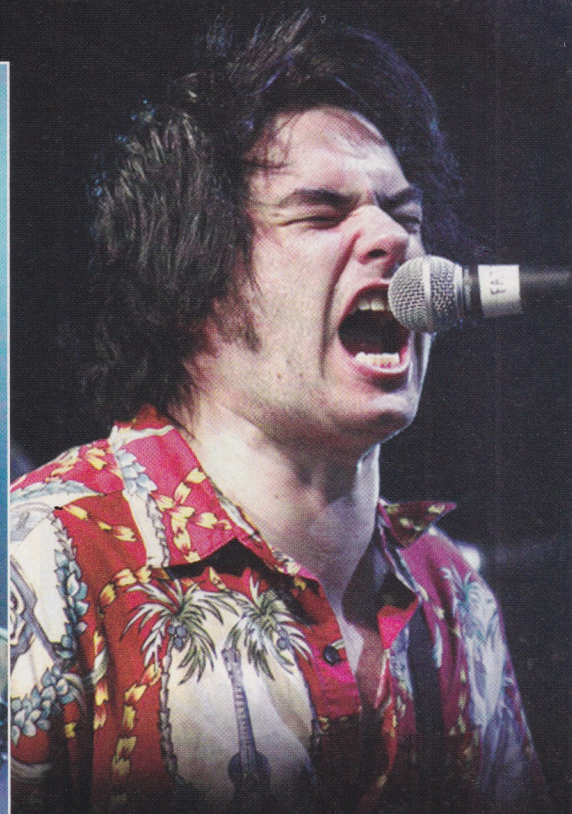
Have you ever worn any part of yer' GG's outfits to a non-GG's event?

No.

Really Spike?

What...? (laughs)

It seems like you guys try to cover every genre of music, but when are you guys gonna go into the studio and come out with a "gangster rap" album? And if that's never going to happen what's your general favorite genre of music to cover/play?



Again, I like the cowboy shit. As religious and conservative as most of those country singers are supposed to have been, it seems like they were struggling with some pretty dark shit, too. You can hear it in their songs.

How many bands, total, in your life, have you ever seen put out a series of square records, and if you have actually seen it, didn't you think it was the coolest fucking thing you had ever seen? (the GIMME GIMME'S just released a series of singles called the Square Dance series, with their new Country album, and a limited number of each of the records was actually square)

I have never seen it done. It is the coolest thing ever to have happened.

In just over a year, do we get 'More Blow, Less Wind'?

Who knows? I am anxious to see. I have been waiting seven long years. The top of the pyramid ain't the whole problem, though.

What would you tell kids thinking about quitting drugs?

Eventually, it will be the only answer. Otherwise, you will turn as useless as all those adults always said you were. For now, though, live it up.

Any last sex tips?

Too many people, you breed like rats, and you're no better. --No Trend



AMPSpace: Friends, meet our friends...

Our friends and supporters of this magazine are absolutely amazing, and in the tradition of networking and mingling that has always been such a big part of the underground, we are excited to have you guys meet each other. Track 'em down on MySpace, say "Hi," and make sure you swing by our page and be our friend as well (www.myspace.com/ampmag). We might just be interviewing you for the next issue!

Name: Russ Lippitt
Profile Name right now: Russ
Age: 31
MySpace URL:

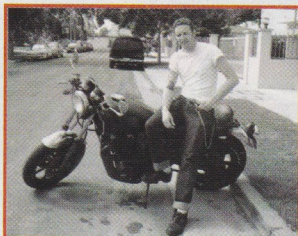
myspace.com/
russlippitt

Hometown: Los Angeles, CA

Favorite band, and why: The Misfits, read my novel, Lion's Share to find out why.

About you in 15 words or less: I'm a punk rock author that believes in anarchy.

About your town's scene in 20 words or less: What can I say about L.A.'s music scene, hardcore since the beginning.



combined with talented playing make these guys a force to be reckoned with among newer punk bands.

About you in 15 words or less: Keep myself busy playing in ADX (myspace.com/adxpunk), skating, & spending good times with good friends.

About your town's scene in 20 words or less: Look somewhere else! There's no dominant genre, though being close to multiple towns makes the occasional good show possible.

Name: Trina Creusen
Profile Name right now: Evil Queen

Age: 20

MySpace URL:

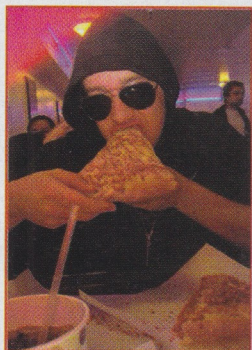
myspace.com/
iamevilqueen

Hometown: Columbus, Ohio

Favorite band, and why: Blitzkid. They give the best live performance of any band I've seen, and they are basically one of the best horror bands ever. Right up there with the Misfits.

About you in 15 words or less: silly, hardly ever serious. A little crazy. Easily amused. Easy to get along with.

About your town's scene in 20 words or less: Columbus has a little bit of everything going on. From pop-rock to death metal.



Name: xMaxx
Profile Name right now: xMaxx
Age: 24

MySpace URL:

myspace.com/
maxxsherman

Hometown: Lafayette, origin New York

Favorite band, and why: That's a fucked up question, to many

to name.

About you in 15 words or less: Rock n' roll!

About your town's scene in 20 words or less: Hahaha the roundup, petars and Justin.

Name: Giuliano

Profile Name right now: g!

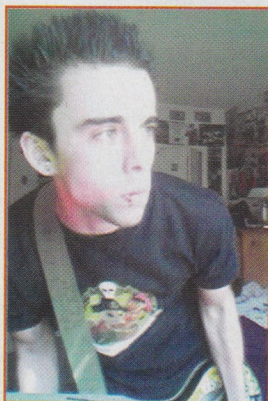
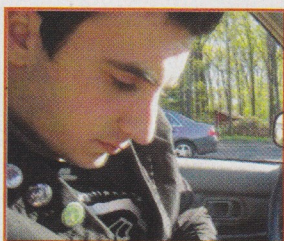
Age: 19

MySpace URL: myspace.com/
runawayiscoming

Hometown: woodbridge, NJ

Favorite band, and why:

Sadplant!
You're at a loss if you haven't heard these guys. More raw emotion than your body has room for



Name: Ricky B
the punk rocker mc

Profile Name right now: Rick Rocked Your Girl (Twice)

Age: 18 years fresh

MySpace URL: myspace.com/
smokedankkush

Hometown: LA California

Favorite band, and why: The

Offspring, I saw them play 2nights in a row with TSOL and Millencolin when i was 8. After those two shows my life changed forever.



About you in 15 words or less: Its in the name ;]

About your town's scene in 20 words or less: Here in LA, some of my friends sell records, some of my friends sell drugs.



Name: Shirley
Profile Name right now:

Miss. Shirley Paola

Age: Twenty-One.

MySpace URL: myspace.com/
shirleymorales

Hometown: all over the bay area, CA


Favorite band, and why:


Alkaline Trio,

Their sweet

metaphoric lyrics always sing a tune close to home.

About you in 15 words or less: I'm a total fly by the seat of my pants kind of girl.

About your town's scene in 20 words or less: With bands like AFI, Tiger Army, & the Nerve Agents originating from our scene, it's pretty self-explanatory... We're the shit. 



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LISTEN UP! LISTEN UP!

Bands That You Should Know

By Matt Cote

Once again, I've brought you four bands that you should without a doubt be listening to. A couple of these band have been around for a while and you may have already heard, but the other two are a little less well known, but definitely deserve to get a whole lot of attention, and are without a doubt on the verge of big things. So I hope you've enjoyed reading these as much as I've enjoyed writing them, and be sure to go give these bands a listen!

compare to the past years?

Every year the fest gets better. This year was amazing and I imagine next will be even better. It is something that I love to be a part of!

myspace.com/younglivers

Dig 'em if you're down with: PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS, SMALL BROWN BIKE, POLAR BEAR CLUB

THE RIOT BEFORE

Richmond, VA

Brett Adams – Guitar, Vocals

You guys come from Richmond, an area literally overflowing with amazing bands. What do you feel makes Richmond such a great place for bands?

Richmond is great for music for a number of reasons. It's relatively cheap to live here still (though housing is definitely going up) so it's possible to live here and manage to tour a decent amount. Plus its location right in the center of the east coast makes it great for starting touring no matter the time of year. You can head south, north, or east and run into a ton of cities really quick. As for the tradition of bands from here, well I'm not really sure how that started. I've only been here a couple years so I don't really know what started it. There is a huge art school here so I guess the band thing is a relatively accepted part of the culture. I just know that it seems like everyone I meet is in at least one band. There are so many musicians and bands here that it raises the bar I think as far as quality is concerned. Just being in an environment like that makes music better.

Your songs are often filled with political messages. How important is it for you to write songs that have something to say?

It's incredibly important to me to write songs with substance, and I often times spend far more time working on the lyrics than the music itself. Political songs are tricky. Recently it seems like people have been using "protest songs" as a sort of way to circumvent thought. It's like as long as you say something about evil corporations or how Bush sucks you automatically have written a song with substance. So while I may write songs that could be classified as

YOUNG LIVERS



YOUNG LIVERS

Gainesville, FL

Matt Farrell – Guitar, Vocals

First off, with the new record, you got to work with two of the raddest labels around, No Idea and Kiss of Death. How was that experience?

Working with both labels has been awesome. KOD and No Idea both believed enough in the band and the people in the band to put out the record. I look forward to talking on the phone or hanging out with people from both. It's nice to have that relationship.

The scene in Gainesville is, obviously, incredible. What to you is

the best part of living in the area?

The support that bands, people and the community have for all of us.

While YOUNG LIVERS definitely fits into the Gainesville sound, you also do thinks a bit differently. What do you think it is that sets you apart from the rest?

None of the members are originally from Gainesville; all of us have only been here for a couple of years. Each one of us grew up in a different music scene with different influences but we also have some similar ones as well.

You guys were lucky enough to be apart of Fest this year. How was that entire experience, and how did it

LISTEN UP! LISTEN UP! LISTEN UP! LISTEN UP! LISTEN UP! LISTEN UP! LISTEN UP!

THE RIOT BEFORE



ASHERS



ASHERS

Boston, MA

Mark Unseen - Vocals

Well we don't wanna or need to be known for other bands. I'm proud, as is Billy, Joe and Andy of our other bands but ASHERS is not a joke/side thing – it's a real band. We have an EP called "Cold Dark Place" out soon on Welfare Records - check it out. It's a blend of punk and metal. We wanna tour. We have a van that runs on used cooking oil and we wanna hit the road!!



FUCKIN' GNARLY

Being that you all do have other bands going, how does the song writing process work for ASHERS? Do you write a lot individually, or mostly just while together?

Well we are starting to write more as a band. At first it was a lot of me jotting down words to a riff Billy had taped for me. The last few months, we got a new drummer and a 2nd guitarist and we are practicing a lot whenever we can and doing songs together as a band. It takes a while to get into a groove with new members. With THE UNSEEN it's easy...me and Scott wrote probably over 60 songs together. It's easy - I know him, he knows me, and I love it still. With ASHERS, it's all fresh and new and I fuckin' love doing this. It's always good to write with new people and I have known Bill for forever. We are now coming into our own as a real unit, not just a few people in a room together. Our drummer Andy is fuckin' awesome and is adding a new twist to our stuff.

While the sound of the band holds somewhat true to the sounds of your other bands, it is somewhat different. What to you is the same, or different, about ASHERS?

Well my voice is my voice, so it may have elements of THE UNSEEN or SELF DESTRUCT or A GLOBAL THREAT, but it's also a lot different to me as of now. It's more raw than the last few UNSEEN albums - a bit more dark. Anytime you write with a different guitarist, bassist, and drummer, it's gonna be different. Billy has an awesome voice and Joe

is probably the best bassist I have ever played with. This band is just plain and simple different. We don't wanna sound like CRASH AND BURN, DEADLY SINS, SELF DESTRUCT, or THE UNSEEN. We wanna sound like ASHERS.

Do you have any plans, as of now, for touring or playing outside of your local area?

As of now, I'm busy with THE UNSEEN. Joe and Bill are doing DEADLY SINS shows and Andy, our drummer, is going out on Warped Tour with his hardcore band SLUTS. ASHERS will tour! Current plan is for a possible September or October tour. It will be small and fun, probably basements and tiny clubs. We need to build a fan base. We just did a mini-tour around New England and played with STRIKE ANYWHERE and also THE LUCHAGORS.

myspace.com/asherstheband

Dig 'em if you're down with: THE UNSEEN, CRASH AND BURN, SLUTS

FUCKIN' GNARLY

Long Island, NY

Garrett Burgett - Guitar, Vocals

The dreaded question first - how do you describe the sound of your band?

To answer that dreaded question, I would have to say my main influence in FUCKIN' GNARLY has to be THE CLASH. I like the idea of keeping music simple instead of

overly complex. THE CLASH plus ONE MAN ARMY plus CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL plus THE LAWRENCE ARMS plus lots of alcohol equals FUCKIN' GNARLY. You can always go to our MySpace page and see for yourself instead of taking my word on it.

You guys come from Michigan, an area that has produced a number of bands recently. What do you think makes it such a positive place for bands?

I think overall the Michigan music scene is pretty strong right now. We have a number of great punk rock bands hitting the road such as WE ARE THE UNION, FRANK WHITE, NORTH LINCOLN and, of course, THE SWELLERS. The Flint Local 432 was a savior to me growing up, personally. That venue closed down and really hurt our local scene in Flint. Luckily it is scheduled to open up again this summer, which should help bring back the Flint music scene. Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo have a great basement "beard-punk" scene. We always have a beer-soaked fun time out there.

You've also been involved with THE SWELLERS throughout the history of that band. How do your experiences with that band help with FUCKIN' GNARLY?

Being with THE SWELLERS really helped me grow as a musician. Nick and Jonathan are two of the best songwriters and musicians I have ever known, so being around them and watching them work really helped me. Having the experience of being in a fulltime touring band will be very helpful once FUCKIN' GNARLY hits the road in August for our first tour.

Lastly, and most importantly - what does your mom think of your band name? Does she honestly approve of you using the word fuck in your name??

Honestly, I don't know if my Mom even knows about this band. When referring to it, I always say "my other band". My Dad always refers to the band as the Gnarlies. Our guitar player Ryan's parents both have t-shirts that are pretty offensive, so I think that's a good sign.

myspace.com/fuckingnearly

Dig 'em if you're down with: ONE MAN ARMY, THE LAWRENCE ARMS, THE CLASH



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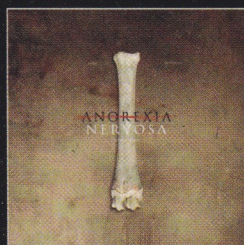
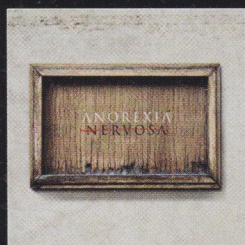
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HOT TOPIC





THE CUTE LEPERS

By John B. Moore / Photos Courtesy Of Blackheart

So The Briefs are over... maybe. Let's all take a minute to let that news soak in and move on to Steve E. Nix next brilliant project – The Cute Lepers, one of the best power pop bands recording today. Currently on tour in Europe, Steve was kind enough to answer a few questions via e-mail about his new band, the future of The Briefs and his quest to finally meet his new boss, Joan Jett.

Congratulations on signing with Blackheart. What was it about Blackheart that made you decide to sign with them?

Steve E.: Hey thanks! I suppose the thing about Blackheart was that they really, really loved the songs. That came across stronger than with anyone else I talked to about releasing the record. They frankly told me that to spend money on my album would be a big risk for them. You know this kind of music isn't really flavor of the month or year or whatever, there's no 'sure success' to look forward to with album sales. They were passionate enough about the music to want us on their roster regardless. I liked hearing that. I also liked the fact that they don't let up on promoting their bands after just a few months, they're a bit more long term than a lot of independents and definitely more so than any majors. Plus I was familiar with the history of the label and how it started and I really respect and like that spirit. Plus the president Kenny Laguna produced "Summer Fun" by the Barracudas... And hey, it's Joan Jett's label!

Have you had a chance to meet Joan Jett yet?

No. At our recent New York show every single person from the label came out except Joan.

she was in the recording studio. We'll meet her yet.

Let's talk about the new record. You proud of it?

Yeah, I'm really proud of it. I think every song is very complete and can stand alone from the others. I'm still writing 'short attention span' abrasive pop songs, but there are a few longer ones on there, and there's for sure some different sounding stuff from any record I've done before. There's loads of tambourines, handclaps and chick backups... manly male back ups... lots of harmonies. I was telling someone the other day, "If the hardcore punks thought The Briefs were gay, wait 'till they hear this record!" I don't know if it's for the Exploited/GBH crowd at all, but it's totally a punk album in my world. But hey, I think Johnny Thunders is punk as shit and Discharge is heavy metal. Different perspectives. I'm proud of the record because it pretty much came out exactly the way I wanted it to. It sounds like a lot of the old records I dig. I hope heavy metal people hate it.

How long did it take to work on?

I think two weeks? I dunno. My memory is pretty fucked. We used four different studios though. Egg studio where they've got a good drum room and an eight track analog recorder, then a lot of guitar tracks in my basement studio, then all of the vocals at Johnny Sangster's studio, Crackle & Pop, the piano on a few songs was at yet another studio... then we mixed at Electro Kitty which is your typical bad ass and expensive mixing studio where it just sounds amazing to hear songs loud. I love working with Johnny and it was very cool to be in a co-production situation with him. We worked it out this way with the different studios to keep the cost as low as possible. My basement is great for guitars, it's always flooding and everything is set up on milk crates... but it's free! Johnny's studio is pretty small and unassuming but it's cozy and he has a couple great vocal mics and great pre-amps. A fancy studio isn't really necessary. I borrowed the money to make the album, so everything had to be well planned and executed within budget to make sure we could pay for mixing at the end.

You're playing the Power Pop festival in Austin this summer. Who are you looking forward to seeing/meeting?

I've never seen the Boys or the Pointed Sticks, I'm stoked! I'm really excited to see the Boys. They're one of my all time favorites. I'm also excited to play with the Tranzmitors again, that band is amazing. We'll have lots of friends to hang out with as well, the Boss Martians, Avenue Rose, The Tranzmitors, Powerchords. Currently we're working on a U.S. tour which will go through Austin for the festival which will be called the "Punk/Powerpop Across The U.S. Tour 2008" or something actually clever... It's going to be us, The Powerchords and Avenue Rose hopefully.

Do you think power pop is finally due for a resurgence?

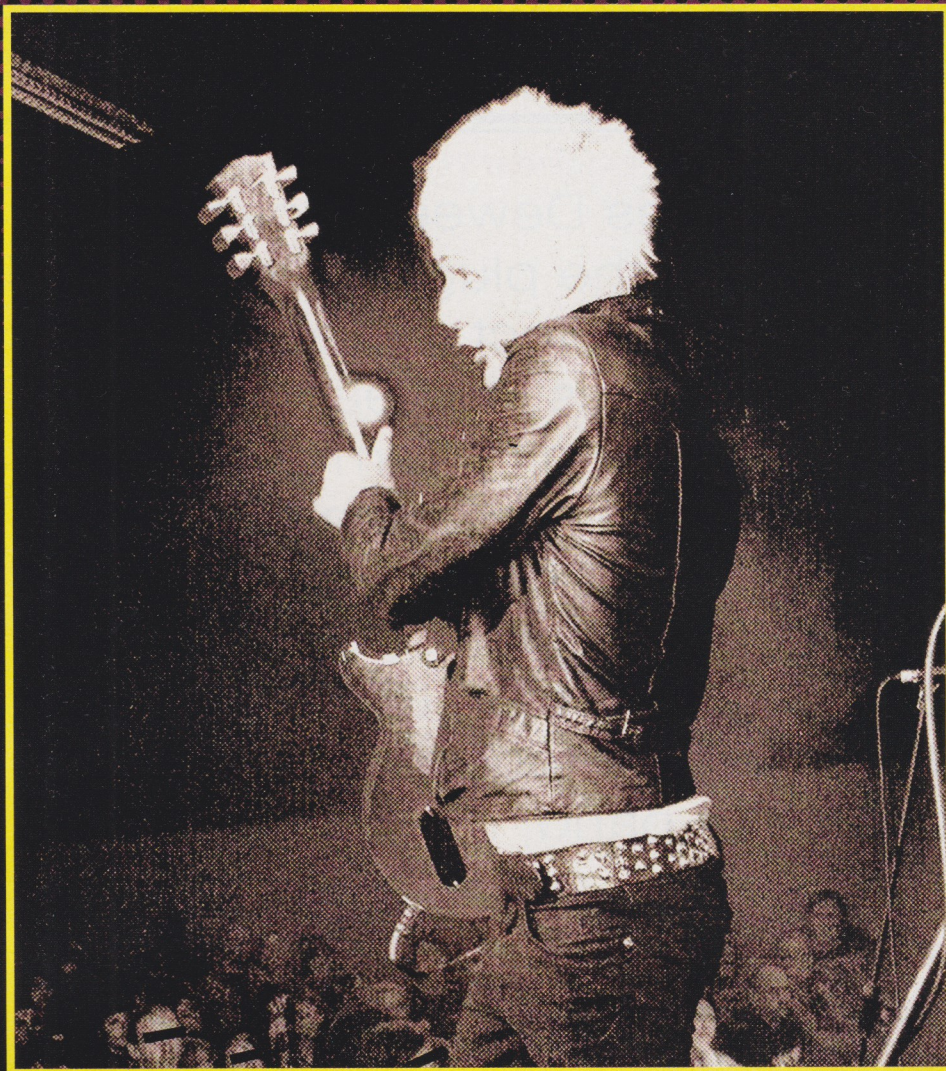
I have no idea. I hope so. It's due for sure, but it almost seems like a refined taste kind of thing. It would be great though... anything to replace the emo haircuts and beards!

You had posted on your MySpace site earlier this year that you were looking for a back up singer. Did you find anyone from MySpace?

No, but that won't stop us from trying again! We found Priscilla Ray who's local for that tour.

You're on a European tour now. How is it going? Who are you playing with over there?

This is our first time over. The tour is going very, very well, you know... considering we're



a new band with an album that just came out. Damaged Goods released it over here in late April and it's apparently doing pretty well. Good reviews and radio play on the BBC and stuff like that that you hope will happen. The shows have been a blast. We've lucked out with some of the bands we've been playing with, in Manchester the Fast Cars were on the bill. They were fucking amazing! Like really spot on performance as if they'd just gotten off tour in 1979! The weird thing is, they are not well known here and they supported us at the gig. Aside from one festival we played, all of the shows are headlining gigs for us... it just seems strange to me, I suppose since I'm a record collector nerd and some of these bands are kind of legendary to me... I think that everyone in the UK who ever liked punk should show up when the Fast Cars play, and they should close the night out! We've got a gig next week with the band London on the bill and I'm very excited about that one too. The favorite gig we've had on this tour was our official record release show at the 100 Club in London. Aside from the fact that I never thought I would ever wind up playing there, get this... the fucking Nipple Erectors decided to play a reunion show and were added to the bill! Shane MacGowen actually got on to a plane from Ireland and made it to sound check for his one rehearsal with the band before they played. That totally made the tour for me. I'm a huge Nipple Erectors fan! Last year when the Briefs were here in England we made friends with Shanne the bassist, and I had been bugging her to make a reunion happen... hey, if you bug people stuff happens sometimes!

We'll be in Spain for the last ten days of the tour, which should be nice and warm for us Seattle kids. We're playing a scooter rally outside of Barcelona and I think they're going to hook a few of us up with Lambrettas so we can do the ride. I'm looking forward to that.

Are The Briefs officially over or is there a chance you will play together or record in the future?

Currently The Briefs have no plans. I'm more interested in spending my time recording and playing with the Cute Lepers. Hey, bands aren't supposed to last forever... unless you're making tons of dough, or unless it continues to be the most fun and most fulfilling thing you can come up with.


Who have you been listening to lately?

Lots of old Belfast punk bands. Outcasts, Rudi, Protex. Great stuff!

What are plans for the band next?

Tour the states, tour Europe again, tour the states again, write, record, go to Brazil or someplace new, I dunno. Cool, fun band stuff... I hope! I really like all the people we work with at home and in Europe so I'm looking forward to spending a lot of time working and trying to keep things afloat.

Anything else you want to add?

(Stevie) Kicks really is serious about older women, hint, hint... and everyone please come out to our tour with the Powerchords this summer! 

REGGIE AND THE FULL EFFECT

By John B. Moore / Photos Courtesy Of Vagrant

Is James Dewees close to pulling the plug on Reggie and the Full Effect, his alter ego for the past 10 years? Yes; no; maybe. Calling in from Memphis, where he's been playing keyboards for My Chemical Romance on their never-ending Black Parade tour, Dewees spoke with AMP. He took time to talk about the band, his newest record "Last Stop: Crappy Town" and the likelihood of resurrecting his old band, the Get Up Kids.

You've been touring with My Chemical Romance forever now. When did you have time to record the songs off the new Reggie album?

I actually recorded these about a year and a half ago, basically right before I started doing this.

Are you going to be able to take some time off before you have to tour behind your new record?

Yeah, the Black Parade tour is winding down and then I have like 6 months off to basically sew up all the Reggie loose ends. It's weird because I've been so busy behind the My Chem stuff, I've really had to put this back on the shelf. I got the masters back the other day and was listening to it and all the My Chem guys and the crew are all big Reggie fans and I can't get them to stop listening to it. So now, everywhere I go that record's on.

So you may get sick of it before it ever comes out?

No, I need to listen to it. I need to re-learn all of the songs.

From what I've heard, it sounds nothing like any of your earlier stuff, which was a lot more kind of goofy and fun. Did you know you wanted to make this one very different from the few albums?

It's weird because doing the funny stuff is great and all, but you always want to be moving forward. You don't want to be a one-trick pony. "What's he going to do now? Oh, it's another joke." A lot of things change in your life personally. I moved from Kansas City and I live in New York now. Also, having Paul (Grey) from Slipknot come in and help write had something to do with it, too. He's one of the main songwriters in Slipknot and he would say, "Dude, that's not hard enough. Make it harder."

I know you recorded most of the instruments on you last albums. Did you bring others in this time around?

I still play all the instruments on some of the songs, but I brought in my friend Bill (Johnson) who is the touring drummer and my friend Cory (White) who is my touring guitar player. I just wanted

to involve more people because I've done this thing by myself tons of times and I was in LA and I wanted some company. I didn't want to stay in the apartment by myself for months. I had different people with me at different times.

Let's talk about the theme of the album.

When I first got to New York, I had never been on a subway before in my life. I learned the subway system in Brooklyn pretty well. So what I did with the record was tie them all in. It's kind of written as an opus, so at the end of the song you hear a counter melody playing that's actually the next song, which becomes the counter melody for the next song, which becomes the counter melody for the next song. Every song ties in together. The songs titles are named after the trains, so you start with the G train and then you transfer to the F train, which is the next song.

Did you have plans all along to do this?

Well, it started that way and at the studio we were kind of confused with how it would work, but Sean Beavan (the record's producer) and I were right on the same page from day one, so we made it work.

Do you plan on touring behind this record?

Yeah, we're working that out right now. (The record's) coming out in June and it was kind of a sudden decision, so we're getting it worked out for like a September tour.

Who will be your backing band? The same folks who were in the studio?

Well, my goal is to get The Draft, the guys from Hot Water Music. They were my band when we were on Taste of Chaos in Europe. It was amazing. It was funny to watch all these popular bands all sitting on the side of the stage watching us, the opening band, play because it was the Get Up Kids and Hot Water Music in the same band together.

There was a lot of talk before your last album about Reggie and the Full Effect being over. Do you plan on pulling the plug on this after this one?

I think it's something where you can never really pull the plug. It will always be there, it just depends on

whether I want to write songs. If I sit there by myself with a keyboard and a drum machine, those will be Reggie and the Full Effect songs no matter what. As far as saying it's finally over, I don't think I'll ever say it's finally over. You hear about bands that say that and then they suddenly have a new record and they're back on the road and it's usually never as good as it was if they had just stayed together.

Speaking of that, I know you get asked this question a lot, so I'll just be one more person who asks: Do you and Matt (Pryor) ever talk about getting the Get Up kids back together?

You know something weird? I just talked to Matt for the first time since the separation today. Our phone numbers constantly change and our e-mails constantly change, so I lost touch with him. I just got an email from him today.

So I guess you haven't had a chance to talk about putting together a reunion?...

(At this point in the interview, James' phone line suddenly disconnects. If I believed in conspiracies I would suspect this was his way of getting out of answering the reunion questions, but... after three minutes, an apologetic James is back on the line.)

So you were saying that you finally connected today?

Oh yeah, it was good to catch up finally, considering how much time we spent together. We didn't leave on bad terms. We just kind of thought it was the right time.

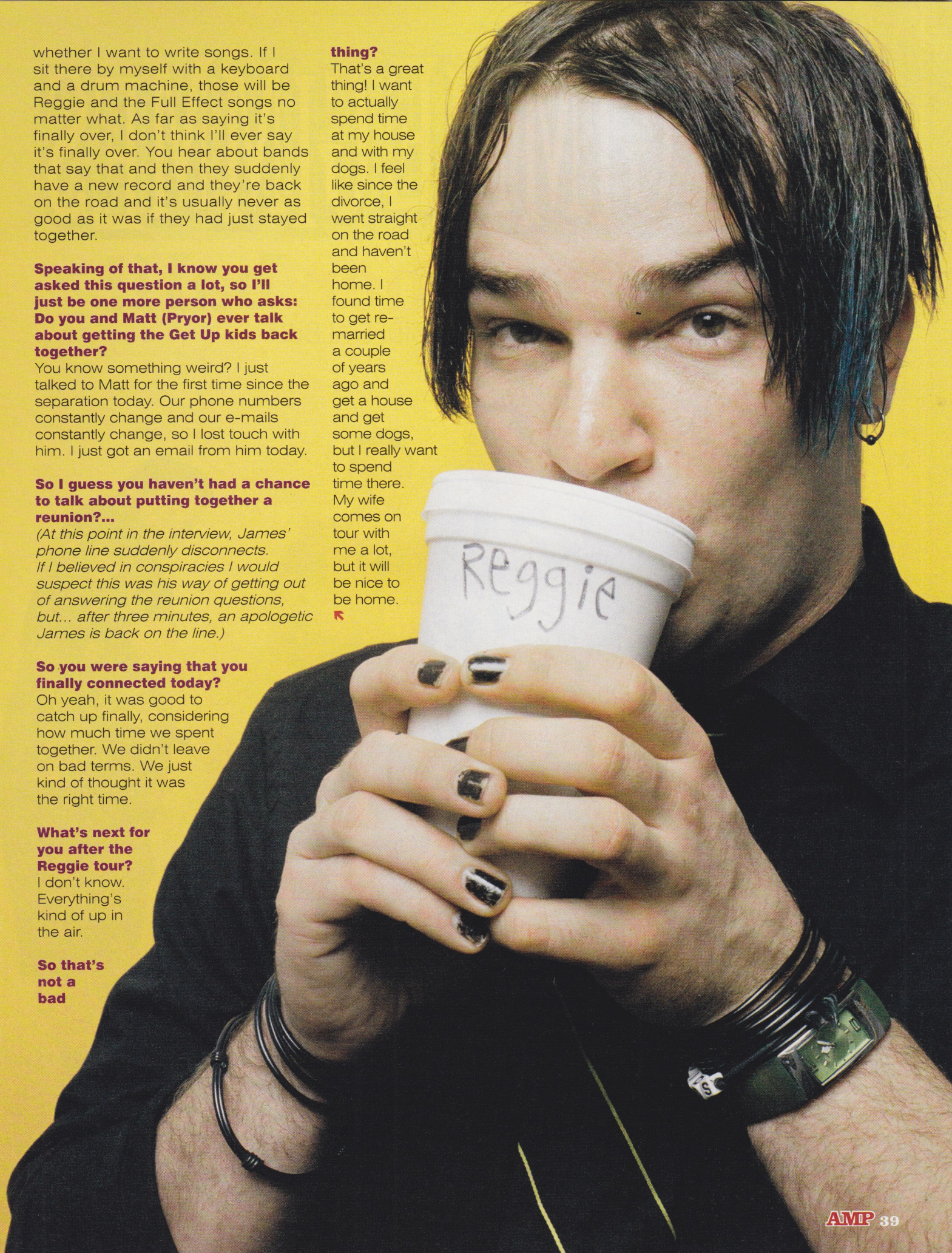
What's next for you after the Reggie tour?

I don't know. Everything's kind of up in the air.

So that's not a bad

thing?

That's a great thing! I want to actually spend time at my house and with my dogs. I feel like since the divorce, I went straight on the road and haven't been home. I found time to get re-married a couple of years ago and get a house and get some dogs, but I really want to spend time there. My wife comes on tour with me a lot, but it will be nice to be home.



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THE A.K.A.s (Are Everywhere!)

INTERVIEW WITH MIKE SKI - VOCALS, LYRICIST, ARTIST, REVOLUTIONARY

By Matt Cote / Photos Courtesy Of Fueled By Ramen

In the current musical climate marked mostly by bands you'd be hard pressed to differentiate and labels moved more by their own bottom lines and bank accounts than their own love of the art they're releasing, one beacon of light rises above the mass of bullshit to give hope to all of us still willing to give music a listen, even after it's let us down time and time again. THE A.K.A.s are that light. After waiting impatiently for what seems like a decade, they've decided to finally get their asses back into the studio to record, and soon, release what will undoubtedly be a critical favorite of 2008, and hopefully a favorite of the listeners, too. With sick guitar riffs, frantic bass lines, tight drums, ear-rattling keys, and the manic vocal approach of Mike Ski, THE A.K.A.s have everything needed to be one of your favorite bands. Couple their sound with the unending passion, drive, and determination to bring their insane live sets to their completely dedicated legion of fans, 2008 is shaping up to be one hell of a year for THE A.K.A.s. THE A.K.A.s are back, they're hungry, and they are EVERYWHERE!

So after a long time away from the road, you guys got back to touring at the end of last year. What was it like finally getting back out there and playing to the crowds?

We are, and take great pride in being, a live band. We've always enjoyed playing music, traveling, and the adventures that touring brings about. We took a much-needed break from the road after over 400 shows on our first record to really dig into writing and finding our way to the appropriate stages of the bands constantly evolving sound and signature. Having continued to tour well beyond the traditional touring cycle of an album was a conscious decision to see the record and

the vision of this band through to where we wanted, which was without a doubt a manic ride of surprises and disasters. When all was said and done, we were fucking exhausted: physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially. Getting to a point where we are re-energized and inspired about where our music was at let us know it was time to take it to the road once again. With more and more bands playing to backing tracks, using body doubles (WTF?) and other goofy stuff, we're proud to flail, fall, break strings and sticks, stop in the middle of a song to take on a heckler, and play our hearts and souls out on a dirty stage in your home town. And yes, we do need a place to stay tonight. Thank you.

A big day just recently passed a couple of months ago - the release date for the long-awaited follow-up to 'White Doves.' So for those people way behind the times, what is the title of the new disc, and how many tracks will their ears be blessed with?

Our new album "EVERYBODY MAKE SOME NOISE!" hit the streets on March 18th, 2008 and we couldn't be more excited. It was a long time in the making and we are confident and energetic about the music and content. After the long road and changes we've survived and endured over the course of the first album, I'm positive that the new album is closer than ever to the original vision we had in mind for our mission. We wrote close to 30 songs in various forms to find the 12 songs that would make a record that we could unflinchingly present as our follow up. Ideally, bands get better with time and experience. We're all excited as we took the time to bang through the weird songs that weren't totally fitting to get to the songs that made the record. Ironically, the opening track was the first song we wrote, and another track on the album was the last one we wrote. In short, the new album is fun, fierce, fearless, and reckless. Our mission is always to be daring and true to our voice and personalities. Honesty is the last line of defense against bad art.

One big difference this time around is the label - it's being released on Metropolis Records, where the first record was on Fueled by Ramen. What brought about the change, and how has the relationship with Metropolis been thus far?

With a band like us, the label that ultimately releases the record has no bearing on the songs, so our attitude towards the change of labels is mostly indifference. Our relationship with FBR ran its course and ended on friendly terms. Having a fresh start with a new team of people who are excited about

JOSIE OUTLAW: A RED LETTER GIRL

By Tiffany Cote

Ms. Josie Outlaw – the keyboardist and the lone rose among the group of thorns known as THE AKAs – recently began her own cosmetics line, Red Letter Girl. We threw a few questions her way to find out more about her products, her future plans, and her ultimate goals for Red Letter Girl!

The name of your company is Red Letter Girl. What does this name represent?

Red Letter Girl was inspired by the attitude of one of my favorite movies, "Pump Up The Volume." Nora Deniro, played by Samantha Mathis, is the character in the movie who writes in to Mark Hunter's (Christian Slater) pirate radio show. He refers to her as the Red Letter Girl, because she writes him these powerful letters on red paper. She later on becomes his partner in crime. That is the spirit that I wanted to capture. A powerful woman who is not afraid to stand up for what she believes in.

So how did the idea for starting your own line come about?

I worked for a well-known cosmetics company for a while, and also worked as a makeup

artist and stylist. I love being creative and using cosmetics as a form of expression, but I was very discouraged when more and more corporate companies were marketing "funky" and "edgy" looks that were designed by those who obviously were on the outside of the culture. So, I decided that I wanted to stop working for other companies and start my own line... a line created for like-minded ladies...those who love to express themselves and stand out!

What type of background in makeup, or beauty in general, do you have?

Before I joined THE A.K.A.s I went to cosmetology school and attended the Fashion Institute in New York City. I've also modeled, styled photo and video shoots, besides working for the cosmetics company. Other than that, I



used to always set up my own "beauty salon" when I was younger. I would invite all my friends over for hair dying parties and reconstruct our outfits for the show the next day!

Your first line, Chromatose, was recently released. What type of product is it?

Chromatose is a nine color collection of chromatone eye shadows. They are loud and beautiful shades that are not tested on animals and each shade comes with a reusable cosmetics pouch. There is a shade for everyone that can be made your own. All of the colors in the Chromatose collection are shimmery except for Panther Power. Panther Power is the blackest black eye shadow.

the band is awesome. We're relentless as a band, so we're hoping that the album we made connects with people the same way it does with us. This record is vital. We're happy to be able to release it to the world and excited to work with Metropolis.

What was the recording process like this time around? You worked with Alex Newport, who is well known for his work with bands such as AT THE DRIVE-IN and THE MARS VOLTA. How did you hook up with him?

Alex had written us an email awhile back expressing that he liked the band. We kept in touch as having someone who has a personal interest and liking of your band is always better than someone who is just doing it for the paycheck. We were most drawn to Alex's work because he seemed to capture the looseness, raw energy, and urgency of some of the bands he worked with. Any magic we have lies in that element of our band and getting that sense on a recording is invaluable. We didn't want something that sounded super polished, over-produced and digitally lifeless. Alex has an approach that we thought would be fitting. After spending a lot of time with Alex as we helped constructing the new studio as part of the arrangement, we were literally racing against the clock. We played live as a full band when tracking the drums for 14 hours a day. Combined with Alex's purist approach, we survived the experience of stressful days and late, late nights to concoct an album that I think reflects that feeling. After all, you know what they say... "All great artists are miserable." Meanwhile, some of us are just miserable.

You guys had some guest vocalists contribute to the record. Mr. JT Woodruff from HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS, Chris #2 from ANTI-FLAG, and the legendary Jello Biafra, who does a poignant yet comical

introduction to 'Everything is a Commercial.' How did these come about, and how do you feel they compliment the album?

I've always looked at guest appearances with a healthy dose of cynicism, and going into the record, we hadn't really planned on doing any at all. Throughout the recording process, the ideas made themselves undeniable. I'm excited about each of the appearances in that they each bring something to the songs that take them to another level, and that they are so individually dichotomous from each other that it's almost funny. Its 3 people that you would probably never see in the same room at once, so it's cool to have them on one record. JT and I were ranting on the phone in the studio and he said he really wanted to help out and be involved. The track he sang on, "Dead Flowers Forever" almost didn't make the record. With his addition, it really inspired and challenged me to make the song happen. It's awesome to hear two voices that are so distinctly different come together. He's got the hooks, no doubt. # 2 From ANTI-FLAG has always been an inspiring force for our band. Early on for THE A.K.A.s, ANTI-FLAG was the first band to take notice of what we were doing and lend us a serious hand by inviting us on tour with them for the 'Rock Against Bush' tour in 2004. Since then, we've continued to be inspired as fans and friends. His trademark snarl and spit brought intensity to our track "We Write Our Own Anthems" that is an anticipated event in the song and the record. Having Jello appear on our album is an unforgettable experience. One of the bands I listened to when I was first introduced to punk, and that I STILL listen to often, is DEAD KENNEDYS. Being timeless and persistently relevant is something I truly admire about him. His appearance is so unmistakable that it makes the 14 year old punk rocker in me all kinds of giddy. Amazing. In the end, we were so happy about

the songs as they stood before these appearances that after the fact, having them involved is icing on the cake.

One theme that exists within some songs, and should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with your band, is the idea of having a social consciousness and not being a pawn and a mindless consumer of all things material. Unlike a lot of other people, you guys actually practice what you preach and do what you can to make our world a better place. How important is it to you to get these ideals across to the kids with your lyrics?

One of the challenges for us in THE A.K.A.s is balancing content that we feel is important with an element of fun. It's a Jeckyl and Hyde relationship that we happily endure. No one likes a band that takes themselves too seriously, and conversely, I for one, feel that there is a giant hole in music culture where not many people are outspoken enough to take a stand. Before we are a band, before we are musicians, we are individuals - people living in the same world as everyone else and giving a shit. Including this inherent concern for the world around us in our music is common sense, and the first line in the sand that differentiates what we do from mindless pop music. I'm pretty sure that there have been a few billion songs written about love, heartache, loneliness, etc. so I don't feel the need to tackle the subject. I find it incredibly boring.

What are a few of the causes and groups who you guys are currently working with, and what are they all about?

One of the current campaigns we are working on is the C3 Carbon Conscious Consumer, through NewDream.org. They are an organization that is dedicated to spreading information about ways you can easily cut down on things that we all do that lead to waste and pollution. I think it's amazing and



Each individual shade has a very unique name. What are a few examples, and how did you come up with these names?

Coming up with names for all the eye shadows was the hardest part. I wanted to come up with clever names that set this line apart from all the others. They make you think of the shade without simply stating the color. I just wanted to capture the spirit of the line that way by making the names as fun as the colors themselves. Some of my favorites are Blitz Blonde (Yellow), Electric Envy (Green), Mod Metal (Chrome), Panther Power (Black) and Flamingo Fever (Pink).

Do you have plans for another series as of

yet? Do you see yourself expanding beyond eye shadows?

Yes I do! I am collaborating with some artists right now to create some limited edition items. Since I grew up collecting records, I want to use that same idea with Red Letter Girl. I want to not only make an awesome eye shadow, but create something that someone is going to want to collect and feel like they can have a unique item that is not mass produced. I want it to be as exciting as getting the limited-edition colored vinyl from your favorite band. I think I am going to stick with eye shadow for now, since there are so many more colors I want to play with. I am also going to expand and offer some male friendly items.

How can people get a hold of your product? Is it available online? Will you have it with you on tour?

Red Letter Girl is available online at www.myspace.com/redlettergirl and www.redlettergirlcosmetics.com is about to launch. I also bring all my products on the road with me, so if you come to an A.K.A.s show you can come and play with some of the shades before you purchase them, and if you like I can also try them on you. We are going to be hitting the road in February so please check out the tour dates and come hang with me!

Once thing that I know about you is that

inspiring to see people who are committed to things larger than themselves. Having the chance to spread the word through the band is something that makes all the hard work of being in a band worthwhile. Seeing others get excited about things they learned about through us is awesome. Some other organizations we work with are Stay Vocal, Plea For Peace, Student Peace Action Network, PETA 2, etc. You can find out more information on our MySpace page and in our frequent blogs. www.myspace.com/theakas

You guys are one of those bands that are damn near impossible to classify. Being that we live in a society that loves to push everything into a genre, and then take that genre and make it into sub-genres, how the hell do you describe your music when you're absolutely forced to?

I enjoy being a categorical conundrum, it's fun and interesting. The technology of music has made it so easy to start a band, make fans, and make music accessible to them that it's hard to stand out in the wake of bands that all sound like what is currently popular. We have an eclectic range of musical interests and influences, in addition to the artists, authors, and other ways we seek inspiration for what we do. Combining it all and finding a way to make it uniquely our own as an extension of our personalities is what making music is all about. Some of the elements we make a point of including in our rock demeanor are rock recklessness ala sixties inspired garage and rock and roll (MC5, THE WHO), the angst of early punk (THE DEAD KENNEDYS, THE CLASH), and a Danceability along the lines of the B-52's. Layered with fist pumping, hand clapping, chant-a-long choruses, we've snidely referred to it as "Smart Party Music." All goofy talk aside, we call it "Dance Hall Fight Music." Get stoked.

Obviously being a unique band with a sound all it's own is what you shoot for when you start a band. At least people used to do that. Anyway, being that you guys are so unique, does it become hard to find other bands to tour with? Do you ever worry that the other bands are too dissimilar from your own, which may cause problems when it comes to relating with the crowd?

You would hope and assume that bands would start out that way! Being different is definitely difficult, but I wouldn't have it any other way. We've enjoyed both the benefits and hardships of being the odd band out and feel like we've gained a lot of personal growth, character, and modesty. We've had bottles thrown at us on stage. We've been threatened, heckled, and walked off stage surprised we didn't get our asses kicked. We've also experienced amazing responses, singalongs, stage dives, circle pits, pogos, and had people tell us that they thought we were the best live band they've ever seen. That RULES. Our path of destruction is on a wider timeline...

its success or failure will be determined further down the line. What happens in the meantime is what makes us interesting and notable. We look forward to the chance to bring our record and show to the readers out there, so we hope 2008 is the year in which the people take their power to the airwaves rather than the other way around. In that

you're a very charitable person, and someone who is always involved in with many causes.

Do you see Red Letter Girl as a possible vehicle for your social messages?

I think one of the best things about being in a band is being able to inform others of cool ideas and organizations, so I would love to use Red Letter Girl to do that as well. All of my products are not tested on animals and I use reusable packaging instead of boxes for my eye shadows so there is nothing to throw away. You can also look forward to products that will be dedicated to raising money for organizations that I support.

It's always nice to see a strong, positive role model for girls within the punk rock scene.

Being in a band, and now starting your own company, you definitely fit that description.

What advice would you give to any girls looking to make an impact within the scene?

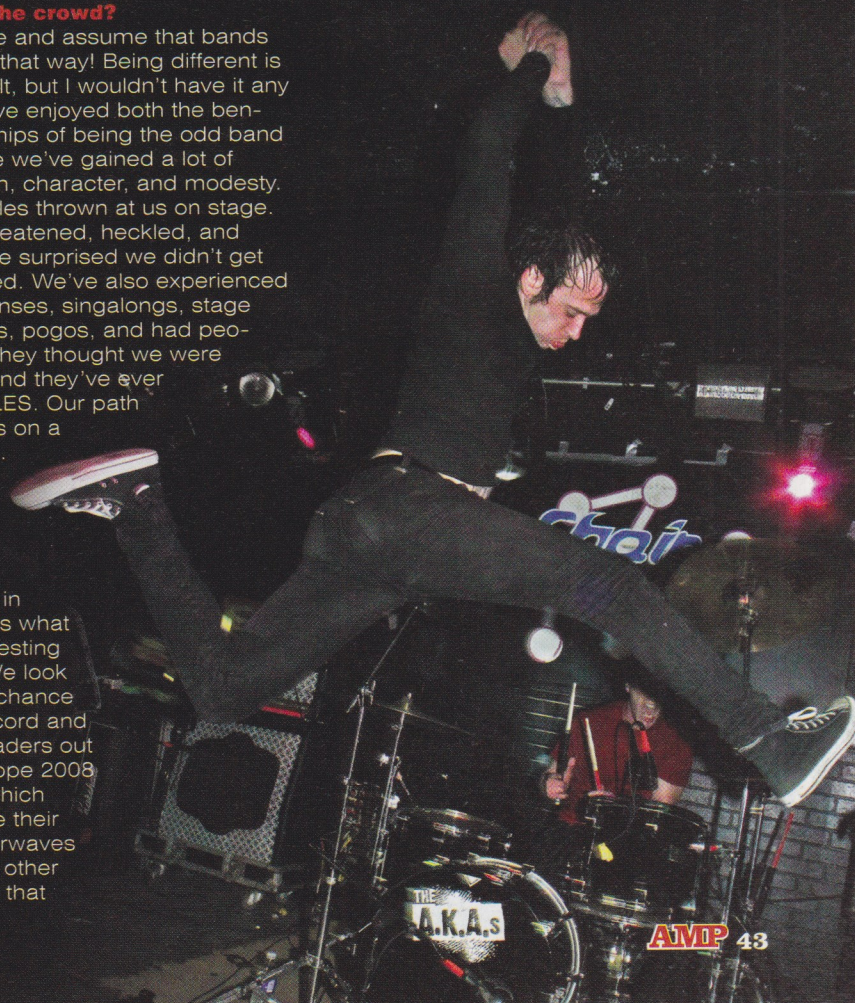
Well, first off, thank you very much! That is a great compliment. As for advice, I think all you have to do is believe in something and you will find a way to make it happen. When I first got the idea to start Red Letter Girl, I had no idea where to begin, and even though I got very frustrated and wanted to give up, I made it happen. It is just like anything - if you don't like the way things are, you have to work to change it. If you take action, you will be surprised what you can achieve.

case, we'll see you all soon!

Any parting words of wisdom?

Fuck, Fight, Dance, Destroy. Xo, The A.K.A.s

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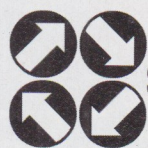




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STAY VOCAL

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ANTI-FLAG

By Dan Gonyea / Photography By Danni Valdez

Anti-Flag has been in the spotlight consistently from their first album *Die For The Government* to their latest endeavor on RCA Records, *The Bright Lights of America*. The album incorporates a lot of elements old fans have never heard before from Anti-Flag such as harmonica and banjo. *Bright Lights* may be a departure musically for Anti-Flag, but that does not dilute or change the message and meaning behind the songs. The band is gearing up for a US tour, including a stop at the Bamboozle, and then are heading across the pond to Europe.

Bassist Chris #2 sat down to share a few words about Anti-Flag's preparations and happenings before they head out on the road.

What have you guys been up to lately?

Oh, we've been wrapping things up mostly with our record, which comes out in ten days on RCA Records. We are planning out a vinyl release for our CD, as well as the normal preparation that comes right before a tour. You know, packing the underwear, socks,

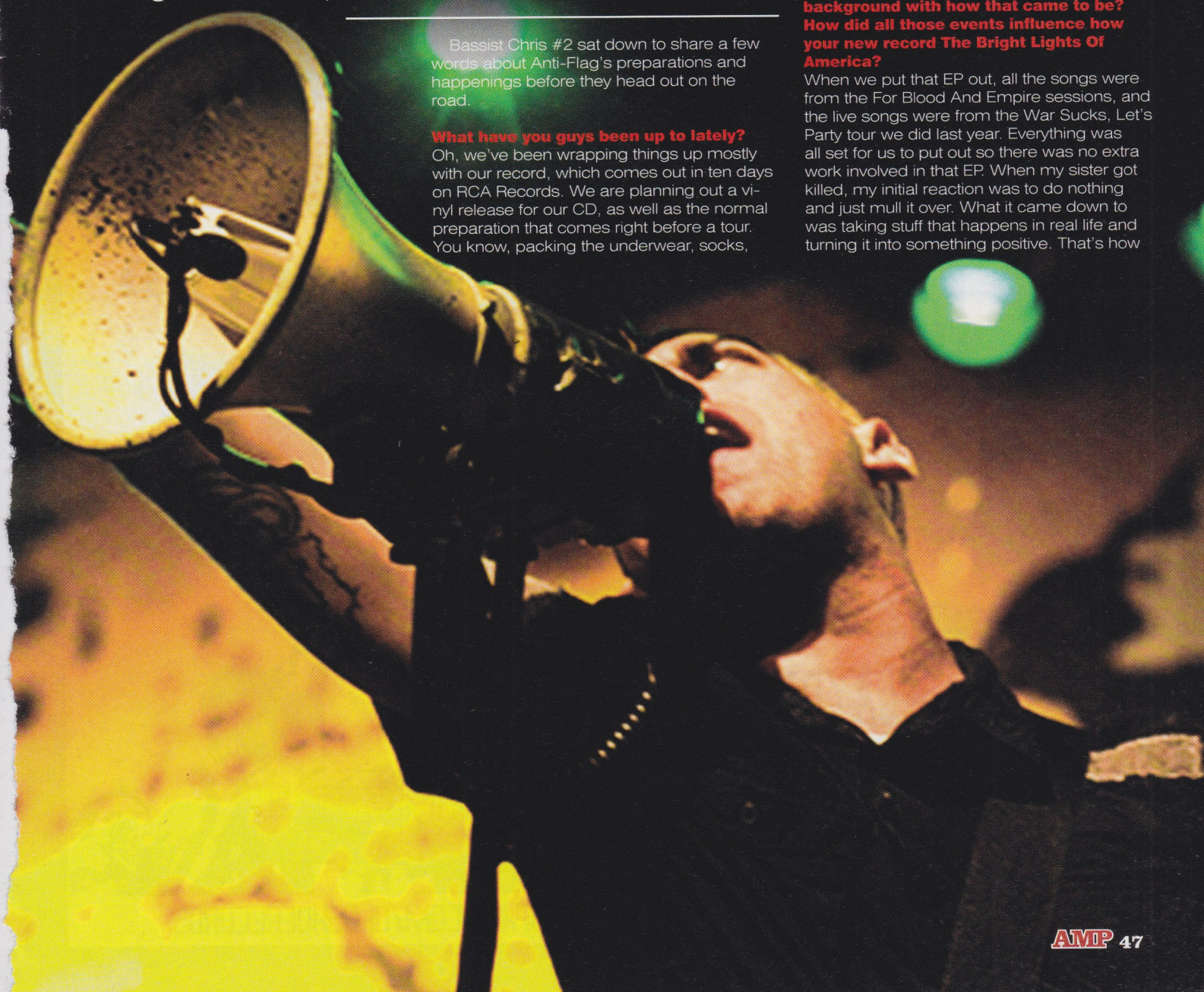
tooth paste. (laughs) There will be voter registration on our upcoming tour too so we have been coordinating all that. There will be leafleting on the tour with animal rights so we have to get all those set too.

Why did you guys end up choosing the bands on your tour?

The bands we chose (Street Dogs, The Briggs, Fake Problems) were all bands that I think our fans would really like, plus we are into them as well. All the bands are playing their music and writing their songs for the right reasons and have strong messages behind them. The Briggs and Street Dogs have new records coming out so it's always good to get some support for new records on tour. We really like Fake Problems as well.

Your EP "Benefit For Victims of Violent Crimes" had an extremely strong message behind it. Could you give a little background with how that came to be? How did all those events influence how your new record *The Bright Lights Of America*?

When we put that EP out, all the songs were from the *For Blood And Empire* sessions, and the live songs were from the *War Sucks, Let's Party* tour we did last year. Everything was all set for us to put out so there was no extra work involved in that EP. When my sister got killed, my initial reaction was to do nothing and just mull it over. What it came down to was taking stuff that happens in real life and turning it into something positive. That's how



the EP came about. I wouldn't call the EP a b-sides record.... That doesn't really fit well. The new record Bright Lights was tremendously influenced by my process coping and dealing with the death. The record itself deals with a lot of the terrible things that people face.

Any plans for music videos for this record?

We do have a video coming out soon for Brights Lights of America. It was done by the guys over at Scrambled Visual, who did the work for Turncoat, Death of a Nation, and 1 Trillion Dollar\$. Keep your eyes open for that video soon!

How was it working with your producer Tony Visconti?

It went really really well. Tony is someone who has dealt with people a lot more eccentric and crazy than us. (laughs) You know, Paul McCartney, Morrissey, David Bowie. Having him as an aid and guide for managing our new album was awesome because he didn't let us overanalyze and overproduce the record. This record is not polished and tweaked; it's organic. All the different instruments we used on the record give the listener quite an experience. It's a different experience every time you listen to it, whether it's in your iPod, headphones, or car. We played all the different instruments ourselves, including banjo, mandolin, harmonica, and piano. We've never really incorporated a lot of that before but wanted to extrapolate on all these sounds and ideas we had going into putting this record together.

Sounds like a pretty complex sound. How is that going to work out live?

We are going to have extra percussion on this upcoming tour. The live sound should be different than the record in my opinion. We are not a purist band trying to recreate the exact same sound that we have on record. The energy that happens live is going to make the experience different no matter how you look at it.

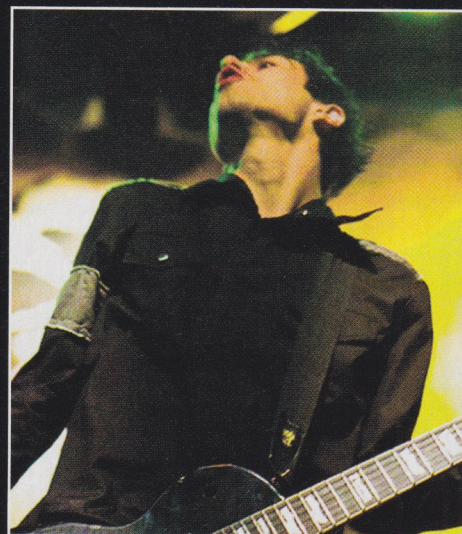
I have been noticing fans questioning the similarities between your new song "Spit In Your Face" and the song "Reaction" by From Ashes Rise?

You know, I heard about that a few days ago from one of my friends. Believe me, it was completely unintentional. In the beginning of the CD, we were actually trying to rip off The Clash's "I Fought The Law." (Laughs) It's funny that people didn't notice that yet. I see some similarities in the intro to the song, but even that has its differences. In punk, we often recycle our sounds and sometimes mistakes like that happen. Think of how many songs are similar to Tragedy. I met the guys from From Ashes Rise and saw some of their last shows, which were awesome. Really, nothing intentional happened with it, and I apologize to anyone who was offended by the similarities in the songs.

Just a side question.... Who maintains the secret section on the Anti-Flag website?

(Laughs) Oh, that's just the folks at A-F Records, and sometimes a member of the band. My personally favorite was the Halloween one we did with the costumes. The young picture of Justin and Pat playing soccer was good too.

What will Anti-Flag sing about if this coun-



try gets the President that your songs have been asking for all this time?

Democracy is all about accountability. If Obama becomes the next President, he better be delivery what he is promising! Even then, there are a number of things such as sexism and homophobia that we will still face as a nation regardless of who is the administration. Those things are bigger than presidents, popes, and the CIA. We will always push to create a more equal world. While I will be cheering January 21st when Bush is finished for good, bands need to remember they are bigger than just that, and there are a lot of other issues out there that we will sing about always. K



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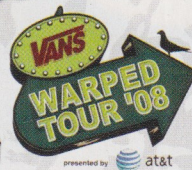
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RUSS RANKIN

INSIDE BARACK'S BRAIN

So I'm about three quarters of the way through Barack Obama's book "The Audacity Of Hope" and it has been an awesome read. I would encourage anyone, political predisposition aside, to check it out. Obama traces his political views and the values which shaped them back to his family of origin. He also paints a vivid picture of how the politics of his home (Chicago) have served as an accurate microcosm of the greater American milieu; how we are all interconnected and that, no matter where in the country someone lives, there is a piece of all of us there.

Obama is a Democrat with no apologies. He is a student of the U.S. Constitution and he credits his early days in the Senate and a handful of his senior peers who took him aside and imparted their years of experience and wisdom. Being a guy who likes to think of himself as somewhat of an intellectual I have thoroughly enjoyed Obama's narrative and his command of the English language.

He doesn't shy away from all of the hot-button issues of the day and gives reasoned and evenly measured responses and ideas for each an every one of them. A religious man, Obama still firmly believes in the separation of church and state and is wary of the fundamentalist Christian movement growing in our country. He is a staunch defender of a woman's right to choose her own reproduc-


tive freedom yet he is also cogniscent of our culture's neglect in educating our young people about the dangers and responsibilities of sex and our failure to provide options (counseling, available contraception). He believes (rightly I think) that if we as a society work to educate young people and provide them with alternatives then we will see far fewer young women in a position where termination of a pregnancy is their only course.

Obama is also not naive about the issues of race in urban plight in this country. As a black man he understands the issue personally and yet, as an American he knows that it can't be blamed on one event or one people and that we are all responsible, regardless of skin color, for healing our country. He bemoans the collapse of the black fam-

ily and is quick to point to a casual attitude towards sex, responsibility and parenting among many black men. He sees welfare as necessary but feels the current system is being abused. Obama holds the view that an honest day's work builds character and self-esteem and is committed to finding real work for people who need and want it.

It seems as though Obama's foreign policy ideas have something for everyone in Washington. He opposed the Iraq War from its inception and has decried U.S. unilateral intervention abroad. At the same time however, he isn't naive about the dangers of the world we live in and is committed to keeping America peaceful and safe. He is as wary of isolationists on The Left as he is of the Right Wing hawks and war profiteers. He understands that America needs to do better in educating our people to better compete in a racing global tech economy. Obama is almost obsessed with the idea of returning America to an economic and self-subsisting world power and his outline on how to achieve this seems well thought out. "The Audacity Of Hope," though partially biographical, is really an outline of Obama's mandate for America should he indeed become President.

Again, I strongly encourage everyone to check out this book. It's not overly long and it covers a lot of ground in a short time.

All of that being said, I still won't vote for him but if he's elected I will definitely sleep easier than I have been for the last 8 years. 

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ALKALINE TRIO

By John B. Moore / Photography By Myriam Santos

It's been about three years since the Alkaline Trio last released any new music and front man Matt Skiba is ready to get their next record out there.

The days between "Crimson" and "Agony & Irony" have not exactly been smooth. The Chicago natives left their long time label Vagrant for V2 Records, only to see their new home close up shop almost overnight. While looking for a new label, the band wrote a new record, scrapped the songs and started over again.

But just months before the new record is released, Skiba is sanguine about the new songs and almost grateful for all the band has gone through. He took time recently to speak with *AMP* about the new album, their new home at Epic Records and even talked a bit about the future of Heaven, his side project with F-Minus bassist Josiah Steinbrick.

Let's start out by talking about your new record, "Agony & Irony"?

We're really excited about it. There were definitely some bumps in the road making it. It took us basically about two and a half years to write the record, but it only took us about six weeks to record it. We had a record written and done and ready to go and we had some label complications, but we also knew in the back of our minds that we weren't making the best record that we could make. Though the label shit and all the pitfalls we had to go through were actually a real blessing in disguise because we now have a record that all three of us are really proud of. We feel pretty strongly that this is our best record.

Were you able to salvage any of the songs you had from the first writing session?

Some of the original ideas were there, but we started from scratch and some of the ideas got recycled and turned into something better. I think of the 10 songs on the record, maybe two of them were from the original demos. We weren't really sure when our record was going to come out, so we just used that time to write and write and now you have "Agony & Irony."

You worked with Josh Abraham on this record. Had you worked with him before?

We have not. It took us awhile to find him but we're glad we did. We had such a great time working with him and the engineer Ryan Williams, who is sort of Josh's right hand man. Both of those guys have amazing ideas and their approach to the studio is very laid back. We worked hard, but they had a laid back approach. The record was recorded initially live and then we went back and started mixing everything and adding in things. They have a really great sense of humor. They're super sweet guys, but also have a good work ethic. It happened really organically. I mean we haven't made a record in six weeks, in years. It was a good time.

What was it about Josh and Ryan that made you pick them?

Well, we liked some of the records Josh has done. He did "Christ Illusion," the Slayer record, which is one of my favorite Slayer records, and I think the Velvet Revolver and the 30 Seconds to Mars records both sound great. I've listened to a bunch of the stuff he's done, even the stuff that wasn't my cup of tea, sonically they sounded great. We also had a lot of mutual friends. Our manager, who is also our friend and we really trust his opinion, said Josh was an awesome guy and would be great to work with. We started hearing more and more of that from friends and musicians who have worked with him. He is super sweet, super funny and makes killer sounding records, and that's what we were looking for.

You mentioned your label troubles early on. When V2 shut down, did you consider going back to Vagrant or another indie label or just releasing this one on your own?

Yeah, we kind of went through every option. Going back to Vagrant wasn't one, because we wanted to take a step forward and that's what V2 was supposed to be. We didn't really have a rule that we needed to go with an indie or a major, we always just wanted to work with people that we liked and that we trust and be on a label that puts out records. We considered putting it out ourselves, but because we'd never done that it felt like we were biting off a little more than we could chew. Writing a good record was the A, number one priority for us and I felt like if we started getting ourselves a little too heavy into the business side of things it might get too distracting.

So obviously it's not the greatest time for the music industry, but when you have someone that you trust and that you know is a genuine fan of the band and a friend, it feels a whole lot better. Luckily we found out that our friend Andy Gershon was going over to Epic and he invited us along. We were very fortunate in that regard.


I interviewed the guys in Against Me! last year and one of the reasons they said they went to Sire was that more people would have the opportunity to hear their music. Was that a factor at all in signing to Epic?

I definitely think that's a plus. I really feel like – and maybe I'm jinxing myself saying this – we started this band because we wanted this to be our career. There are bands like Social Distortion and Rancid, that as long as they keep making great records, people will keep coming to their shows. I feel like as long as we keep throwing down, we're going to keep having people who come to our shows and maybe a few people picking up our records, I feel like we would do that regardless. But with Epic, we now have the potential to reach a lot more people and for the band to take the next step. I am more than thrilled and thankful for where I am in my career, but certainly the more the merrier and having that chance to grow is very inviting. So our buddy went over to this label and we knew he knew what he was doing and everyone we worked with on the business side had great relationships with the label, so everything was sort of in place for us. It's been really unscary for us. Not having that glass ceiling that a lot of Indies have is nice. It will be interesting to see what happens.

As a fan, I was excited to see Asian Man re-release "Goddamnit" with some extra songs and a DVD. Do you plan on re-releasing other earlier records?

Not yet, but we've definitely thought about it. "Goddamnit" came about because it's about the 10-year anniversary of the record and there was a lot of extra content because when we did that record we were just getting the band off the ground. "Goddamnit" was something special and people who bought the re-release have suggested we do it for other records, so we'll see. Shit, if we can keep putting out records we put out 10 year ago, I'm down.

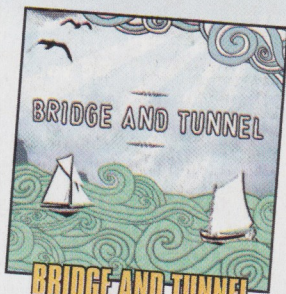
Do you have plans to record again with Heavens?

We do. I'm already really busy working on Alkaline Trio stuff, but I was with (Heaven band mate) Joe (Steinbrick) doing some stuff last night. The way we did the last record is he would send me the music and I'd write to it. And as I travel this time around, he and the drummer Cornbread will write some stuff and send me the tunes and I'll take some sketches with me and write from the plane and when we can get together we'll go into the studio and make sure everything fits. It's a process because I'm gone all the time, but it's also fun because there's no pressure. We don't have a label, we don't have any time constraints and it's just fun for us. We're thinking we're going to do a record and at this point it will probably be a digital only and maybe even a free release. Who knows it might not be put for five years, but we're at least working on it. It's a nice kind of side outlet. 

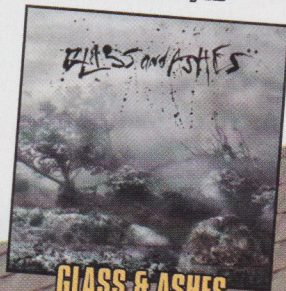


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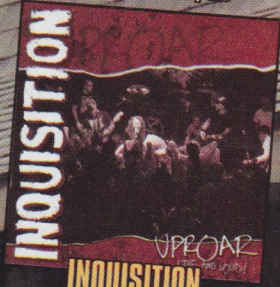
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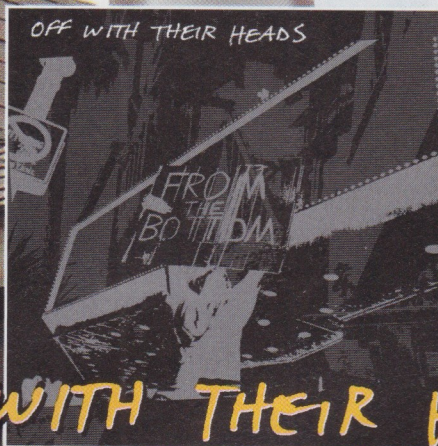
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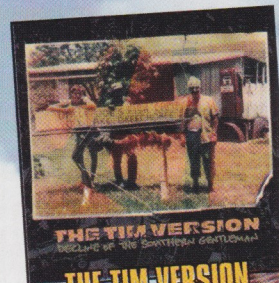
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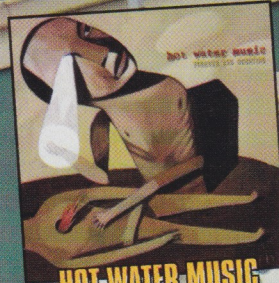
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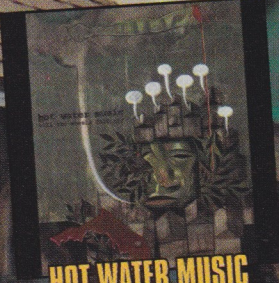
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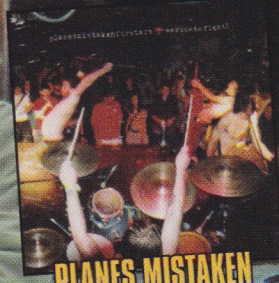
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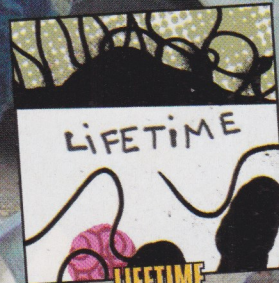
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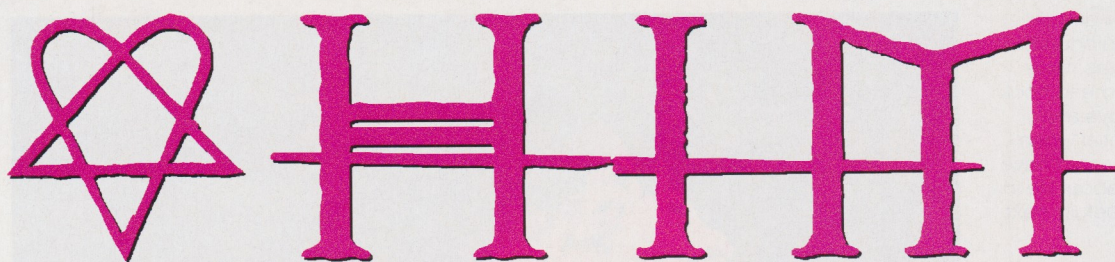


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INTERVIEW WITH VILLE VALO

By Shirley Morales

As of this year, I know H.I.M. accomplished being the first Finnish band to have an album certified as a gold record in the United States, which is so epic. How does that make you feel?

I know what I'm going to give my ma as a birthday present- the gold disk! It makes me feel proud. It's always good to be first in that kind of thing... you know, been there done that. We just gotta make the next one platinum then. We got the chance of having 'Rip Out The Wings Of A Butterfly' play on a lot of radio stations. A lot of people called in. We told the street team a lot of people worked their asses off, so you know it's a lot of thank you's to a lot of people outside of the band. I can't say it's just our fault, there were a lot of accomplices in this plan. (laughs)

I know you mentioned before that you guys started off as a BLACK SABBATH tribute band and them being one of your main influences and you guys have even covered a few of their songs like 'Hand of Doom' and 'Paranoid'. How much have they influenced your life aside from music?

I don't really think there is any

life besides music... for me at least. The big thing for me was basically the fact that they were born in and grew up in the fairly small town of Birmingham, England, and they weren't necessarily the best looking guys (and would have never made it on American Idol), let's put it that way. So in that sense they gave us hope that as a band coming from the middle of nowhere, Helsinki, Finland that maybe we would one day have a chance of succeeding internationally and be able to visit Australia and travel all across North America as well and all that. Most of it has happened so I can't complain at all, but maybe one thing about BLACK SABBATH, was giving us hope in succeeding.

How knowing of the

does it feel you're part new

influence for the new generations like BLACK SABBATH was once for you?

Those kinds of questions, they make me blush! I don't think we've quite battled that one yet. Then on the other hand I guess it remains to be seen if we do have any influence. We've met a few musicians from a few younger bands that say that they like what we do and I hope that it's the same... that we can be influential to them in the same way that SABBATH was for us. Do it your own way and everything is possible. More or less it is a lot of hard work and go for it. That's basically what we've done so I don't know how to react to somebody saying that we would be influential.

I was told that you recently went on tour with METALLICA, how was it sharing the stage with them?

We basically played just a few festivals, like big arena gigs, and that was last summer. (We were) a little nervous, obviously you know they're very loyal, METALLICA fans that is. They love METALLICA more than anything else, so it was a tough gig for us, but at the same time we had the opportunity to play for a lot of people who hadn't heard about our band before. In that sense it was a test of patience, and a test of determining how

PHOTO: PEROU



good we are ducking beer bottles and we are pretty good at it. It was fun; unfortunately we were busy and METALLICA was really busy as well, so we didn't have time to hook up. I just shook hands with the guys and that's all. They were highly influential when I grew up, for me personally, so it would have been great to sit down and chat about life in general, music or whatever... hopefully next time.

I read online that you bring your pet along on tour, if you don't mind me asking what kind of pet is it and what's its name?

My pet? I'm allergic I don't have any pets. I have a mouse or a rat living in my house that I'm trying to get rid of, but he won't go away, so he's my pet. But I'm not traveling with the rat. He's my burglar alarm and he's watching the house when I'm away. I was probably talking about our drummer. We've been calling him our pet occasionally, Gus. He's like having a sperm whale for a pet. He was a big guy but he lost a lot of weight so he's more like a tiny little sperm whale baby now. (laughs)

Cute! I want a sperm whale baby as a pet. But aside from mammal animals as pets let's get on a more interesting subject. Tell me more about the new DVD release 'Digital Versatile Doom'...

Well it's just something that a lot of people have been asking about us releasing some kind of live CD or live DVD thing or whatever. We never thought that we were ready and we never thought that we were good enough and we started working on the whole thing back in 2005. (At that point) we decided that it was way too early and wanted to wait for a bit, and then maybe 6 months before we actually shot the gig at Los Angeles' Orpheum Theatre we started to scout for locations and that one looked the best so we just utilized that one. It's fairly boring to watch for 90 minutes... watching 5 guys just sweating on stage. We're not that animated, or not that aggressive or anything so we thought that having a great looking place would give the whole DVD a visual edge. I mean as pompous and romantic as we are.... yeah so... it was just two gigs we played and they took the combination of both for the DVD. I haven't watched it myself since, I mean whenever my face is on television I turn it off.

How did you guys pick what songs you were going to perform on the DVD as far as the set list was concerned?

We kept changing the set list occasionally and as we were touring determined that we definitely wanted to play a couple of songs off the album *Sleepwalk and Fast Hope*. It's a nice long track... there's a long cigarette break for me in the middle when everybody else is jamming and playing their solo and stuff and we wanted to have more of the rocking songs rather than a lot of ballads. That's the way we were as a band around last September when it was shot. We had a lot of songs to choose from, but also if we would have skipped songs like 'Poison Girl' or 'Join Me In Death' or 'Buried Alive By Love', we were gonna be disappointing a lot of people. We get off on the audience's reaction anyway so it's nice to play songs that they feel comfortable with.



PHOTO: ALAN RALPH

I know you've worked with the director of this DVD before for your video on 'Wings Of A Butterfly', but how was it working with MTV Grammy-Award Winning director Meiert Avis on this DVD?

Meiert did that 'Butterfly' thing and then he did 'Kiss Of Dawn', and he was kind of the first choice. He had been working with bands like U2 and he's done a lot of very different kinds of stuff and that was very exciting for me personally since he was uncategorizable since he didn't just direct pop videos or rock videos. He did everything and since we do have a lot of different likes in our music as well we wanted just to have a guy who would be able to understand what we're all about. Also he's Irish and that's always a bonus. He's just a great guy; we got a long very well when we met for the first time with 'Rip Out The Wings Of A Butterfly' and we started talking about a live DVD at that time and that was back in 2005 and it took like 2 1/2 years to get it done. Pre-production is important; we've been sitting and thinking about it and what to do wicked hastily because it's a big production and there's a lot of people involved, so you gotta make sure that it's right. Meiert is a great guy, he's just uh.. He's a crazy, a lunatic artist and you don't have a lot of them in the entertainment business anymore.

So Ville, what's up with the biggest fan footage thing? Did you guys pick the fan who's journey would be recorded for the DVD, or was it all based on fan submissions of people documenting their trip?

To be honest with you the little short documentary of the boys and girls traveling to see us play our gig in Seattle was done by Meiert Avis as well. He sorted that thing out since we were touring at that time. I guess we were playing with METALLICA in Europe

when that thing was shot so we weren't directly involved. They were shooting a lot of that stuff on their own, and then Meiert was traveling with them and some video guys were traveling with them, but then we met for the first time in Seattle and we were blushing. Again, it was so weird seeing those people traveling such long distances and they were all smiley and all happy and everything went very well and we had a chit chat with everybody. It was just one of those things that don't happen too often so it kind of left me in a positive way, speechless.

Okay so I know you've explained this a million times in other interviews, but for me please explain the birth and evolution of what has pretty much come to be known as the modern ying yang of our time, The Heartagram.

I've always loved symbols and symbols go very well together with rock and roll. A lot of metal bands use the pentagram. IRON MAIDEN has Eddie the Head, the monster that's kind of like their mascot and LED ZEPPELIN used the four runes in their fourth album. I was hoping that one day there would be a moment where somebody in the band would come up with a thing like that, that would be strong and that would transcend length barriers and all that... just a simple visual thing. The day I turned 20, like 11 1/2 years ago, I was waiting for a couple of my friends to come to my apartment and bring in some booze and we could celebrate the fact that I was more of a man than I was before. So I drew that thing and then I showed it to the guys when they came to my place and they were asking me, "What are you gonna call it, it's looking really good", and then I just called it the Heartagram. It happened very organically and very naturally, I wasn't really thinking about it a lot, but then one of my friends was working in some advertising company somewhere

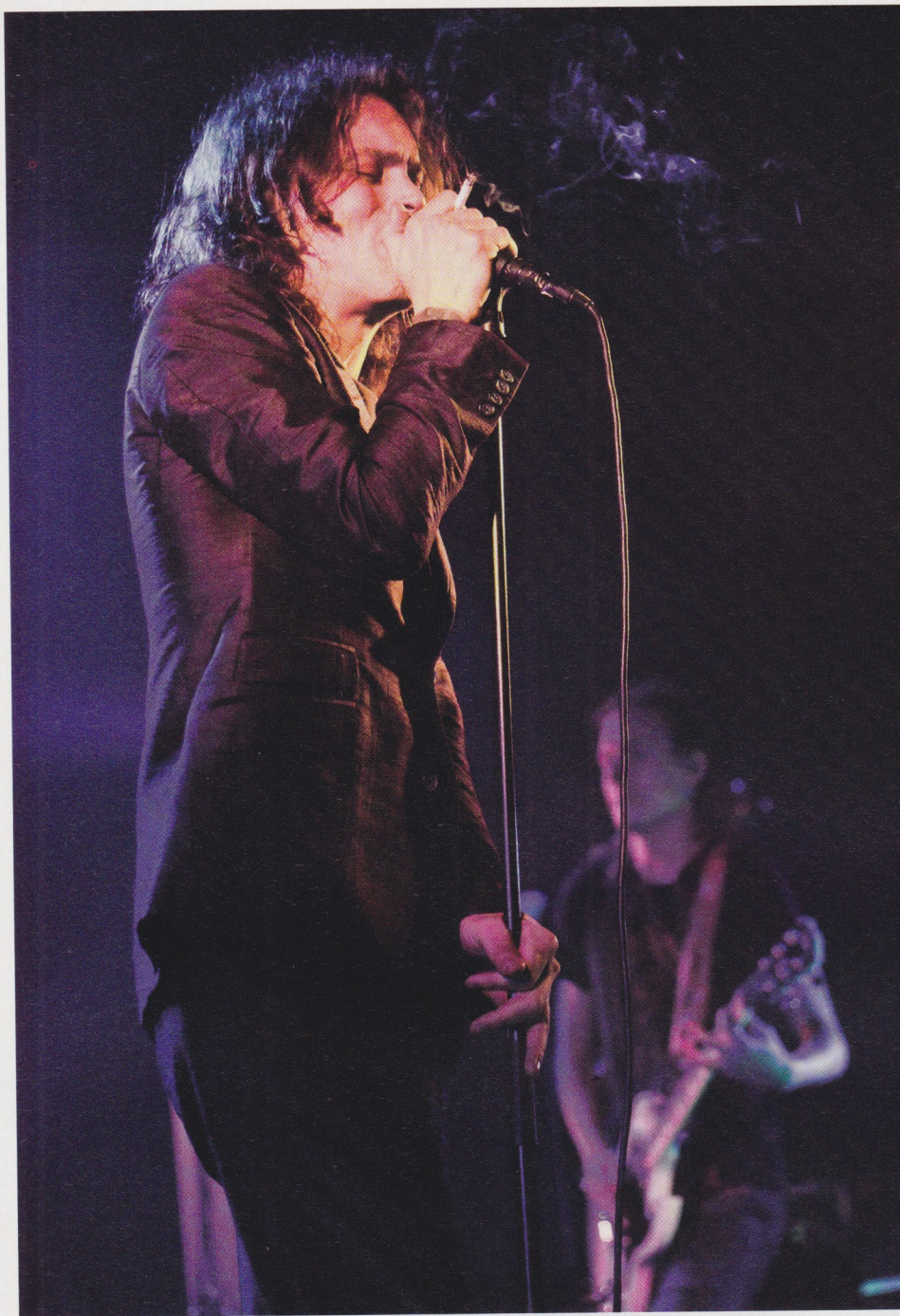


PHOTO: ALAN RALPH

in Helsinki (and) he retouched the drawing and made the final version of it. Ever since that we've just been using the same version more or less. We haven't really changed it. We put the circle around it occasionally, sometimes it's without a circle... I just don't know... it's weird how a thing that I was just drawing down on a paper, waiting for my friends to bring me a beer, and then in the nearly 10 years after that, the symbolism has traveled so well and means so many things to different people, I mean you know people have it tattooed on their bodies?! It's crazy, and it's beautiful, that's one of the things you can't buy with money or you can't plan on in advance. It took a life of it's own and I'm really happy for that... how can I not be? It's crazy how that symbol is basically more well known than our band or the music.

I know that one of your biggest fans who

sports a really big Heartagram tattoo is Bam Margera; so I'm wondering, what's your relationship with Bam and how the hell did you two end up becoming such great friends?

Whoa, well our relationship is just strictly platonic. (laughter) Before Jackass was big he was doing the CKY thing and he was traveling all over the world doing a lot of skate demos and he arrived in Helsinki one day back in 2000. He bought *Razorblade Romance* at a local show and fell in love with the album so much that he wanted to fly over from Philadelphia, PA to London to see us live. It was our first London gig, and after the gig he came knocking on the dressing room door introducing himself. We didn't know who he was and we just gave him a beer or two and within a couple of months Jackass had become really, really big and

he came back to Helsinki again and we kinda hooked up and sat down. I got him drunk and actually piggy backed him back to the hotel where he was staying. He was so drunk he couldn't walk! Since that we've been really good friends. One day he just gave me a call and said that he wanted to direct a video for us and we decided let's do it for 'Buried Alive by Love' and we just did it. It's weird- there were no business men or whomever introducing him to us. It was basically just him knocking on our dressing room door after buying an album in Helsinki, so it was as random as that. Ever since we've been in touch. He was filming something in Helsinki a month ago and I was hanging out with him then and we're just very busy, but we keep seeing each other 3 or 4 times a year. I wish it would be more, but he's successful, he's very busy with what he does and we're touring a lot, so there's not a lot of opportunities of hanging out together.


So will Bam be helping produce more music video's for H.I.M.?

We were talking about it, it's just that it's a schedule thing and we won't be shooting any more videos for Venus Doom, so whenever we get back into the studio and stuff and I'm gonna give him a call and play him some songs and if he likes them, he's more than welcome to be involved with directing one. It'd be great, it's always a lot of a fun with him.

I noticed you're on the line up for the Projekt Revolution Tour again this year, towards the half end of the tour. Anything else us H.I.M fans can expect in the near future after that tour?

We'll be touring in Europe and after that we're probably gonna take a break for a bit 'cause we'll basically be at the end of a cycle when it comes to Venus Doom that basically means the touring is done when it comes to that album, and we gotta start working on new material. No plans when we're going to the studio; maybe early next year and I'll be writing new songs all the time and rehearsing with the guys so I don't happen to know what musical direction the album's going to take; not yet. I guess we'll just go into the album sometime next year and try to get it out as soon as possible. We're a touring band and we like touring and I like recording albums, so there's no reason to stop doing that. We'll finish up touring Europe in the summer and then we'll see where our heads are at. If everybody in the band is energized enough to go into the rehearsal place straight after the touring is done or if we want to take a break. We'll take it mellow for a bit. We'll see, that's actually the cool thing about us... we've done album, tour, album tour, album tour cycle for the past 12+ years, so it's a long time.

That's so admirable because it keeps you so busy and personally as a fan keeps us on our toes and excited to see what you guys come up with next.

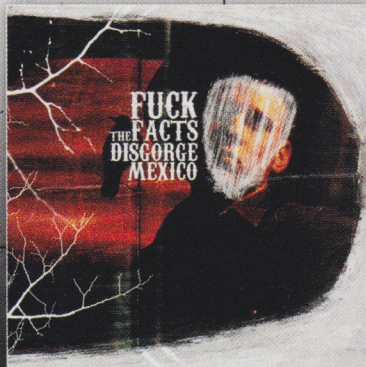
Well me too, you know? It's very interesting as a band to try something different, and to just be creative and take the band and the music somewhere else. We'll see what happens. I'm looking forward to it. 



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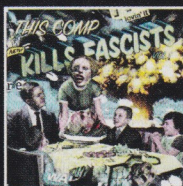
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INTERVIEW WITH ZACH OF A KISS FOR JERSEY

By Crystal Lowe / Photo Courtesy Of East/
West

This is not an intro. This is a note from the editor. When AKISSFORJERSEY was first brought to our attention, one of the first things that came up is that they are quite religious. The second thing that came up was their CD. Of these, I really only care about the latter. The CD was amazing, and as brutal as it was beautiful, and something that I think a lot of our readers would be into. What bands talk about when allotted pages in our magazine is up to them, and it is not up to us to have a personal or political agenda when representing these bands from our underground. Does AKISSFORJERSEY sing about God? No, they fucking scream about it, and bring it to the table with all of the passion and energy you would hope for from any band that truly believed in what they were holding close to their hearts. I will never accuse anybody of being too extreme. I think that is where our scene begins to get it's most beautiful. Some bands talk about God, some talk about Satan, some just talk about girls. When we the listener get our luckiest, it's when the bands are just talking about something they truly believe in, and it comes through in their art. This is one of these bands, and while I not be on the same page as them secularly, I am excited to see what they do over the next however many years. — Brett Mathews

You guys are going to be part of the Scream The Prayer Tour this summer. Is this the first Christian music festival that you have been a part of? What are you expecting in terms of audience reaction as opposed to more conventional shows you have been a part of?

Yes, it is the first all Christian tour package we

have been a part of. We have done tours with some awesome Christian guys in the past though. We are very much looking forward to this tour. We hope this thing will be a huge outreach and ministry to kids throughout the summer and a lot of eyes will be opened, and the spirit of Christ will hopefully really be felt! We are expecting some great Christian fellowship!

The new album is called *Victims*. What can people who haven't heard AKFJ expect when they hear the album? How does it differ from your last album?

Well, I feel as though when you put our album in (if you haven't heard us before) you will feel and hear very passionate music. We strive to have a very diverse style. I guess a little something for everyone incorporated into our music. This new album differs from the last album in that *Victims* is definitely more up-tempo and driving! The message of the album is very clear and this new album will just not let up. We really hope that everyone will be accepting of this album and if nothing else just give a listen to the message there!

You guys hail from a small town outside of Winston Salem; has the environment had any affect in your sound? What do you enjoy most about your hometown scene?


Wow, our hometown scene is amazing. It may be cliché, but there really is no place like home. We have made some great friends and fans around home. The thing is, around Winston the scene has always really been straight hardcore/metal, which obviously we are a little softer than that scene; but anyways, we always grew up playing those types of shows so that definitely had a bit of an influence on our sound. We always looked for

a way to impress more of the hardcore scene around here so we always strived to put on a good high-energy show, despite the difference in musical stylings.

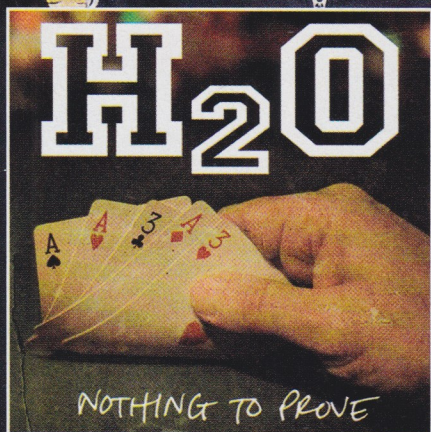
What's the gnarliest show you have ever played and why? What is the best show you have played and why?

That's a tough one. We really do enjoy and feel blessed that every night we get to play for new people. Some of the best shows can be a smaller crowd. I would have to say when we first got to play the Whisky A Go Go in Los Angeles. It was pretty overwhelming to play such a notorious place and have everyone really dig us! Other shows that stick out are some great hometown shows we have been a part of (a SWIFT reunion show to be exact).

From what I understand you guys draw lyrical inspiration from the Testaments. What message do you hope that listeners take away from the new album or would you rather leave it open-ended?

Man, just that Christ loves us so much and the plans that he has for us are so wonderful and amazing; the great things that he can do for us if we just follow him. In all of this, the album though, we really wanted to express how we feel about Revelations. The whole album is based on that book of the Bible and we truly believe that the time is at hand. There is so much disaster (the earthquakes in China, War, so on...) it's so clear that something is at hand very soon. So, we just want people to know that Christ's love is greater than all of that. We worked very hard on this new album and are very proud of it, we would love nothing more than everyone to give it a listen and hopefully take something that can maybe touch someone's heart. That's all we can hope for! 

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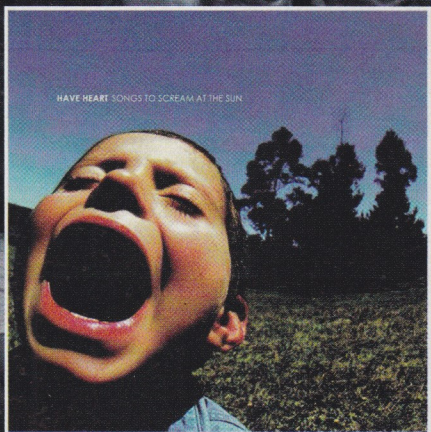


PHOTO: TODD POLLOCK

VERSE AGGRESSION



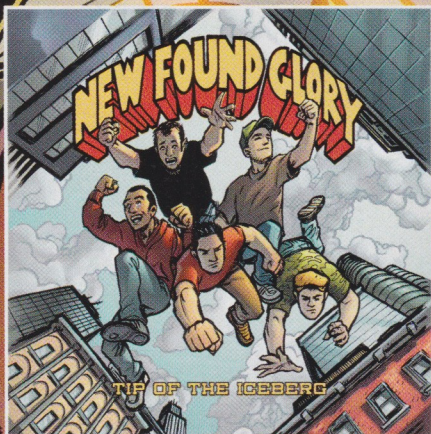
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NEW FOUND GLORY

IF YOU DON'T LOVE ME (1:56)

HAVE HEART

BOSTONS (2:49)

CEREMONY

HE-GOD-HAS FAVORED OUR UNDERTAKINGS (2:21)

AMBITIONS

SINKING (2:18)

CRIME IN STEREO

...BUT YOU ARE VAST (3:23)

VERSE

OLD GUARDS, NEW METHODS (2:32)

RUINER

REPETITION (1:16)

DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR

NOWHERE TO TURN (2:08)

I.S.H.C.

BACK TO THE FUTURE (1:30)

PHOTO: CAMERON GARDNER

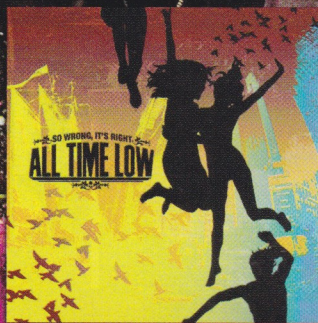


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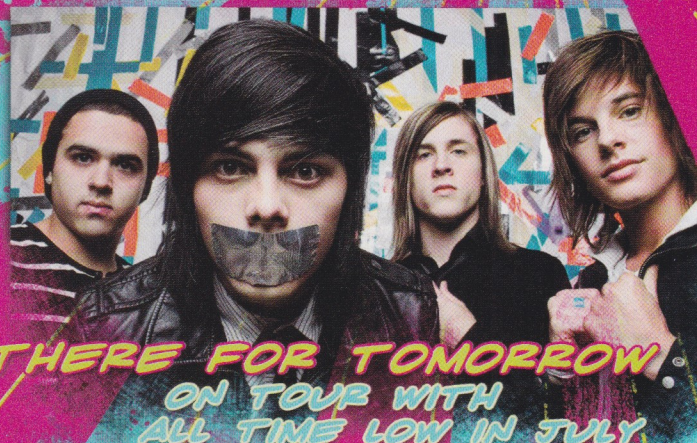


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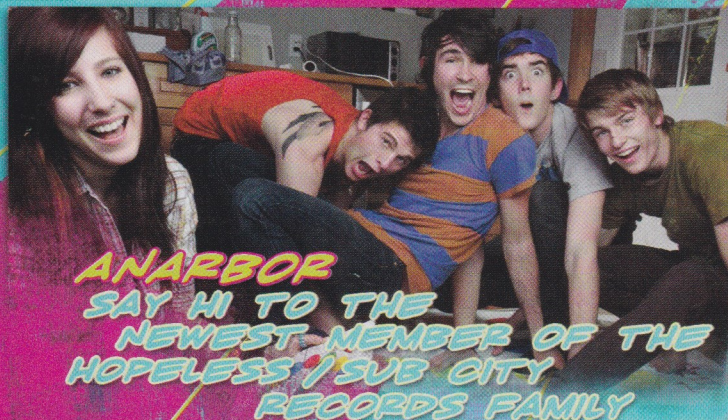
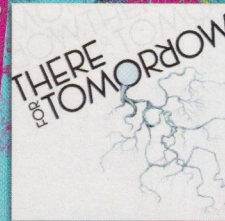
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HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS

INTERVIEW WITH DRUMMER ERON BUCCIARELLI

By Matt Cote

Few bands, if any, have had to deal with so much over the past few years as HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS. Already embroiled in a lengthy, drawn-out lawsuit with their label, Victory Records, the band was dealt what to many other bands would have been the knockout blow - the loss of a band mate. When Casey Calvert passed away on November 24, 2007, many questioned the future of HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS, but less than 24 hours after losing Casey, the band had rallied together, with the support of the Calvert family, and decided to continue on. Since last fall, the band has completed the writing process for their third CD, entered the studio to begin the recorded process, and is presently in the final stages of putting the bitter dispute with Victory behind them. It's tough seeing any band dealt such a hard hand, but when it's a group of guys as genuine, caring, and compassionate as HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS, it really hits home. Hopefully the following years will be far more kind to these guys than some of the previous. We here at AMP would like to once again extend our condolences to not just the band, but all the family, friends, and fans of Casey - he was one of the most amazing, funny, and fun-loving guys I've ever had the privilege to call a friend. And it's with far more enthusiasm that we wish nothing but success to one of the hardest working bands out there on a successful return - good luck to our friends in HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS!

NOTE FROM INTERVIEWER: At the time of the interview, the contract situation between the band and Victory Records was still not settled. Any and all questions pertaining to this matter needed to be passed over and could not be answered due to still unsettled legal process. A follow-up piece will be done once the situation has been resolved to answer any and all questions still unanswered.

So you guys are back in the studio now for the first time in a long time. How does it feel to be able to put everything behind you and be back as a functional band?

As I write this, everything isn't entirely behind us just yet, but by the time this prints, it should be hopefully! On a brighter note, it feels amazing to be back in the studio and to be a band again. The last year and half, the last six months in particular, have been extremely trying for us. I think we've all earned honorary law degrees and that sucks when all you want to do is play music. So it's great to get back to some sense of normalcy in our lives. Things will never be the same. We lost our good friend so we'll never be able to truly put everything behind us.

Have you guys taken more on yourself this time, as far as publicity or press goes, or is it just business as usual with the label?

We've always been very hands on with the business of our band and we will continue to do so. If anything, we will be more hands on and not rely so much on our advisers all of the time as that's what got us into this mess in the first place.

What do you think you guys learned, individually and as a band, from the entire





process of the lawsuit?

For starters, if you're in a band, avoid lawsuits like the plague. There are always alternatives. The emotional and financial pressures are immense and are probably not worth the outcome. Our legal system may be setup for justice, but obtaining justice is a VERY costly affair and an extremely lengthy one as well. There are so many variables that you can't plan for in lawsuits. Our "plan" never worked out the way it was proposed to us, because you can't predict things like how quickly judges and lawyers will act on something or what your opposition will do.

What advice would you give another band that may be faced with a similar situation?

Try your best to work out your differences in a more civilized manner. Had we known what we now know, we would have never gone down the road we did. We made a huge mistake in how we handled our situation. It put a huge strain on our band and we can never repair a lot of the damage that's been done. Do your best to prevent yourself from ever getting in this position to begin with. On the other hand, in some ways we're stronger as a band for having been through that, but there are better ways to gain

life experiences than suing someone.

Obviously, another topic that we need to discuss before we can move onto positive news is the tragic loss of our friend Casey. It's been nearly six months already, which is unbelievable. How did you guys manage to keep your heads on straight while dealing with not only this tragedy, but the lawsuit on top of that?

When Casey passed away it was extremely tough to deal with. We lost a good friend, a family member and a band mate. We were all a mess because it was so unexpected. When tragic events like that happen it makes you realize what is truly important in life, lawsuits not being one of them. We tried our best to only focus on Casey and his family. Unfortunately, with lawsuits you have to take specific actions at specific times or you end up getting fucked, so we were always being pulled back into it, even when we didn't want to be involved in any of that. It was basically at that moment that we realized we needed to end the lawsuit as quickly as possible, that there are more important things in life and that if we were to continue on as a band, we had to consider some options that we wouldn't have considered

weeks earlier.

Was there ever a time when you thought there was no way the band could carry on?

We talked about everything in depth the following day on our ride home. We mutually agreed that we should carry on, that Casey would have wanted us to. We got a lot of support from Casey's wife, family, friends and fans urging us to continue, so it made us feel comfortable with that decision.

There's no good way to ask this and not sound callous, but what has been the hardest thing deal with, as a band, since Casey's passing?

Just dealing with the fact that our friend is gone has been tough in and of itself. The sad fact is that we were all probably closer to Casey than we are with our own families and loved ones, just due to the amount of time we were around each other. So when you're that close to someone, it's not easy. I've personally never lost someone so close. Witnessing how much Casey really touched people hasn't been easy either. Beyond that, the first time we tried to practice was pretty rough. If I recall, we played only a few songs, it didn't feel right so we just spent the rest of the day talking about everything that had happened with Casey and of course the 800 lb. gorilla that was our legal situation, which we could no longer avoid if we were to continue on as legal timelines were looming.

Not everyone was lucky enough to know Casey like you and I. To those who never knew him personally, how would you describe him? What's one thing about him that they still to this day don't know?

The best way to describe Casey was quirky. He made you laugh just by looking at him. Sometimes it was intentional, other times all he had to do was walk in the room a certain way. He was a very friendly guy, who enjoyed being in a band a lot. He was essentially a big kid. He had a bond with children and dogs, which were always quite humorous to witness. He had a toy collection that would rival the most spoiled of 8 year olds.

Another question that I know a lot of readers will have is about Casey's wife, Ashley. How is she managing, given the obviously awful circumstances? And how are Casey's pets, who were so important to him?

Ashley is holding up pretty strong given the circumstances. I don't think I would be as strong if I was in her position. His pets are fine. Ashley probably loves animals more than Casey did, so they are just as spoiled now as they have ever been I'm sure.

Following Casey's passing, MTV was very compassionate and seemed to have a deep caring for the situation. Yet, when the results came out that it was a drug interaction, they ran the headline stating Casey died of an "accidental overdose," which obviously has negative connotations. What did you guys think when you read that from the various media outlets?

That phrase always brings negative connotations with it, but unfortunately, there's really no better way to describe what happened. I think the MTV story was done in a tasteful, informative manner. I think 90% of the media outlets were respectful about everything, even the ones that might not normally support our band. It was encouraging and uplifting to see people put aside their personal opinions on our music to pay homage to the loss of our friend.

What has this situation taught you about yourself, about your band, and about life?

Life is much too short to spend it doing something that doesn't make you happy. We're extremely lucky to be in the position we are. Situations like this make us way more appreciative of every accomplishment, every opportunity and every experience we've had in this band. You take a lot less for granted as you

never know when things could end.

Ok, now that we've got that behind us, let's talk about positive – a new record! How has the writing process changed, given the new dynamic of the band?

We still pretty much write in the same manner. One person brings an initial idea to the table and we all work on it until everyone is happy. We've had to re-write a bunch of parts and do some re-structuring to a few songs. In some instances it's forced us to take a more creative approach to a part than we might have done in the past.

Has anyone taken on any different roles, going from a five-piece to a four-piece?

It doesn't really change any roles in the studio. However, live, not having three guitar players means that JT will now have to play guitar in parts of songs which he might normally just sing and let Casey play. We've been having Micah do a lot more of the background vocals, which I think will add a new dynamic and depth to our live show.

Casey was obviously well known for his thunderous growls and screams – do any of the new songs have anything similar, or is it something that will forever remain with Casey?

Truth be told, we've been cutting the screams back for a while. I know some fans are pissed and have been pissed about that, but to be honest, we never really intended to have as many screams on the first record as we did. Our producer was indifferent on the subject and rather than cut parts that might not really fit the song, just left everything in that we tracked. I think those intentions were more obvious on our second album where we had a lot less than the first. We had even less screams planned for this record. There were still parts, but we were using it more like an instrument to accent certain parts rather than as another vocal. Sadly, we never got the chance to do even that. We've

definitely had to change certain songs and parts to compensate for the accents that Casey's screams provided. This forced us to take a creative approach to things. We've beefed up the guitars in parts, added gang vocals, choirs and all sorts of effects to still capture some of that energy. As for our old songs, when we pay them live, we encourage our fans to scream along and help us out.

I know that on your last tour, you had already had a good amount of material written, definitely enough for a full length. Did you scrap any of those songs and write new ones with all of the time off, or are most of the songs ones that were written with Casey?

We've kept some of those songs, but have made heavy revisions due to both our natural dissection we do in the process and because of us having to adjust due to Casey's screams no longer being there. We've had so much time, time that we're not used to having so we've scrapped a bunch of songs because we've since written much better ones. We write in a very democratic manner. One person brings an initial riff and we all work on that riff, adding to it and changing it, until it develops into a full song that we're happy with. No one has really written an entire song in our band, but that being said there are a couple of songs on the album which started with a Casey riff, but have since evolved into something different.

How would you describe the sound this time around – is it classic HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS or are you guys doing something a little different this time around?

I don't want to give it away as I think too many bands these days ruin the surprise for their fans. Where's the anticipation, where's the suspense anymore? Maybe I'm just showing my age, but when I grew up, you never knew what an album was

going to sound like (aside from a single), until you actually bought it or heard it over at your friends. I will say that there are some songs that are similar to older songs, but we've continued to grow as a band and as songwriters, so that growth is reflected in this new material. We've definitely taken some chances with certain songs and attempted to expand on our sound. I think the greatest bands in the world (with ACDC excluded) evolve with each album. Not that we're the Beatles or anything, but where would music be these days if they kept writing the same songs that they started off with writing? Some of their best music, (and most influential of all time) was written later in their career. With each album they changed more and got even better. We want to evolve as well and see how good we can get. I got off on a tangent...This is very much a rock album with tons of hooks and great melodies. Everything about the album is infectious (in a good way). We're super excited about these songs!

I know you guys are actually in the studio as we speak. How has the recording process been going?

The recording process is going great. We've had so much time to think out this album and really plan things out. Every part was fully prepared when we got into the studio, which is completely different from the last two times where we were literally coming up with parts/songs on the fly in some cases. That level of preparation has enabled us to spend more time focusing in on getting great tones for each instrument. Additionally, we were able to change tones for every instrument on every song so that things don't get monotonous. We also focused a lot of attention on the extra, finishing touches and attempted to really create some excitement for people's ears as they listen to this album. Those are the best albums...the ones where you can listen to them a thousand times and you still find something unique and cool about them on each subsequent listen. We want this album to be new and exciting on the first





listen, the twentieth and ten years down the road.

Given the long time between releases, you're working hard to get this one out ASAP. How did your time in the studio this time differ from last time, given your push for a quick turn-around?

No real difference as far as time frame. It looks like we will have spent five weeks in the studio making this record once we're all done which is about what we did on the last two records.

What's the time table for a release as of now? And do you have a working title?

Obviously we would like this album to come out as quickly as possible. Summer of 2008 would be nice, but you also don't want to rush things. That's something we'll figure out as soon as we finalize our agreement with Victory. We've all been coming up with titles and there really isn't anything that's sticking out just yet. I think we're going to wait until we've finished the album and can see the picture as a whole before we name it; see what fits best.

Do you know what the future holds for the band, in terms of labels for future release? Is this your last release for Victory or is it too early to know that yet?

The specifics of our deal with Victory are still being tweaked and what we have is confidential, so even if things were worked out 100%, I wouldn't be able to speak about them. We're just focused on album three at the moment.

So when the last CD came out, the climate was fairly bleak for the music industry, and it has only deteriorated further over the past two and a half years. The future is digital, not disc, and even then the real problem is piracy. What do you have for expectations this time, given how down the industry is?

I think we've made the best record of our career and I hope that fans get into it as much as we are. The chances are extremely high that our new record is not going to sell

IN HIS MEMORY: AN INTERVIEW WITH ASHLEY CALVERT

By Matt Cote

There has been a lot written about Casey and his role within the band, and how the band has continued on since his passing. Sometimes seeming to be lost in the shuffle is Casey's other role – that of a husband to his still newlywed wife, Ashley. They lived together in their dream home with their many animals, who I can tell you from personal experience, Casey talked about like a father would his children. "I can't decide if I want to have a kid or just get another dog" is a direct quote I heard the last time I saw Casey. Ashley and Casey had a truly amazing relationship, and the love they had for each other comes through in her every word. I checked in with Ashley to see how she's doing and to give her this chance to remember Casey and share a few stories with everyone.

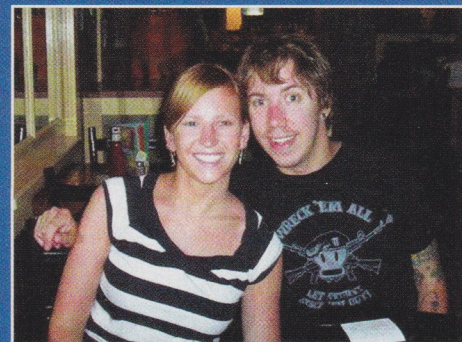
It's hard to believe that nearly six months have passed since we lost Casey. What have you done to try and keep a sense of normalcy in your life?

It is really hard to believe that is has already been six months. In some ways, it seems like Casey just died moments ago and in other ways it seems like he has been gone so long. Some days I still wait for him to call me from the road and tell me about his day or expect to hear the dogs bark as he pulls into the driveway. I feel like every minute is unpredictable. Some moments I feel like everything will be okay and others I feel like breaking down. All and all, the people in my life have helped me so much. The

band and their families have been amazing and all of my family and friends have really been understanding and supportive.

How often do you speak with Casey's family? How is everyone in the Calvert family doing?

I have actually become much closer with Casey's family since he died. I definitely can't speak for the family, but for the most part, I think we all are trying to live our lives as a tribute to Casey. Casey's dad has gotten a collection of Casey tattoos and his sister Cory named her adorable baby girl that she had in January Casey Grace in his memory. No one wants



to forget about him and his family has really helped to keep him alive.

You're a school teacher, and given that your husband lived such a public life, I'm sure most, if not all, of your students knew what had happened. How have your kids helped you through this tough time?

My students have really been my saving grace in a lot of ways. I didn't go back to teaching until after the holidays, but when I did return, the students were wonderful. For as much crap as the public gives teenagers, they really do have some amazing qualities. Many of my students have been more willing to talk about Casey than some adults and have really made an effort to help me feel normal again. The students have taken up collections to donate to animal shelters in Casey's memory and really go out of their way to make sure I am doing okay. I think one positive thing that has come from Casey's death is that students are more willing to talk about their own struggles and experiences with death. They realize that they are not alone

nearly as many copies as either of our first two, but with how pervasive the internet is and how it continues to grow with the iPhone and other smart phones, there's also a good chance that just as many people, if not more will be exposed to us and hopefully like what they hear. We want as many people to hear our music as possible, expectations are pointless right now. The industry sucks right now - part of that is due to the people controlling the strings and the other part is the access technology has given to everyone. The industry people pretty much ignored the impact of the mp3 when it first started rather than embracing it. Now they're playing catch-up in a race that I don't think can be won. That aspect is really their own fault. The other side of that coin is the technology, which has lead to torrents and other various means of downloading songs. The industry will eventually regulate those sites, but what they can't, and will never, regulate this sort of Robin Hood mentality that people have adopted to justify their actions. People aren't worried about taking money from a big music conglomerate because they don't see it as affecting the bands. Unfortunately, that's not how things work in the real world. Downloading doesn't take a dime out of the CEOs pocket. For example, Warner Music Group lost a ton of money last year but still paid out their top brass multi-million dollar "bonuses". These corporations aren't taking the hit for the money they lose from illegal downloading, they're firing thousands of employees each year, spending less money to promote your favorite bands and not investing money into developing newer bands. It's all cyclical too, with less money to promote and develop bands, the music suffers further and the sales go down further as no one wants to pay for a CD that only has one good song on it. Those are just few of the problems these days and by no means a be all, end all account. The industry is in flux right now and its going to take some time before any one new business model is proven to work. Radiohead and NIN have done some cool

things, but that stuff isn't practical for smaller bands or beginning bands. Every band will have to get more creative with their marketing and figure out what works for them.

You guys obviously caught lightning in a bottle with "Silence in Black and White," and the sales have gone above and beyond what anyone could have ever expected. Has it really ever set in on you, just how many records a million is? Does it even make sense to you that something you've created has been heard by that many people?

That's a lot of records. That record came out at the right time and struck a chord with people I guess. Before it came out, we hoped to sell 20,000 in total, so that we could have a go at being a full-time band, so 1 million just sounds insane to us. It's hard to comprehend when you're inside looking out. Every once in a while you get a glimpse of what we've accomplished. It was particularly evident to me after Casey passed away. The story was getting coverage in the craziest of places; like Entertainment Weekly, in newspapers across the world and I think the Rock And Roll Hall of Fame (or maybe it was the Grammys) even included a picture of Casey in a montage of everyone that passed away last year at one of their induction ceremonies. So when you look at things like that you get a different perspective, because that stuff just doesn't happen unless you've reached a certain level. It still seems weird to think about how many people have heard our music.

So you guys are getting ready to get back on the road for the first time since November, and on a pretty huge tour, joining the likes of LINKIN PARK and CHRIS CORNELL on the Projekt Revolution tour. While it's kind of a strange fit for you guys, it's a pretty good way to get back into touring. How did the tour come about, and what do you expect from it, given you'll be playing to a crowd who may not be so familiar with your music?

Our booking agent hooked the tour up for us. We're all about playing to people that might not

know who we are and then - hopefully - winning them over on stage. We've always approached tour selection from that perspective and I think that's a big part of the success we've had. If you play to people who only know you and are only there to see you, you're not growing. We want as many people to hear our music as possible, so taking tours like Projekt Rev is right up our alley.

Do you have any plans for touring after that stint finishes?

We're definitely going to do some touring this fall to support this new record. No firm plans as of this moment, but that could change tomorrow as always.

Given all the ups and downs that HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS has experienced over the past four years, how would you describe the experience? Do you still see it as something positive, or has there been too much negative to go along with the amazing experiences?

It's been a journey to start with. It's certainly been a chaotic and tumultuous ride, but it hasn't been without its share of amazing points. I think overall, our career has been extremely positive. Once you take a step back from all of the negative, you realize that we're really living out our dream; creating and playing music for a living. We've toured the world playing music and made an impact on a lot of people along the way. We're truly lucky!

I'd like to give you a chance here, at the end, to say anything you want to the fans that have supported you through all of this crap over the past year or so. So go ahead and let it out.

Thank you so much for your never-ending support throughout our career. I don't think we would have made it as far or kept things together during the hard times without you. We're so very lucky to have fans such as you! We're sorry it's taken so long to get you some new music. We'll see you this summer and beyond!! ☘

and that even people who seem like they have everything can experience pain and loss. I think I have given them an adult to turn to who they otherwise many not have had in the past.

One thing that is very important to you, and was to Casey also, is your animals. Have you had any new additions to the clan? How many are at home now?

I have not had any additions since Casey left, but I have fostered several pets for the humane society since Casey died. In fact, I fell in love with and fostered a dog from the shelter where I volunteer named Casey. I would say her name had something to do with it. My best friend from college, Sarah, ended up adopting Casey and even decided to keep her name Casey as a tribute, which I thought was really cool. I currently have five animals. Dobby was the dog Casey adopted when we were in college, who he named after the Harry Potter character. My mom swears that Dobby looks like Casey! Dobby was Casey's dog and I absolutely spoil him rotten. Then, I have a shar-pei named Miele, two domestic cats named Dexter and Milton, and then the animal that gets the most attention is my hairless cat Dr. Pepper. As you probably know, JT and Matt both have hairless cats. Casey begged me to jump on the bandwagon, and I finally agreed. So, for our first wedding anniversary last year, I found a hairless cat from a rescue organization because I refuse to buy animals from breeders. She was shipped from Utah and Casey picked her up from the airport. He decided to name her Dr. Pepper for two reasons - one, it was his absolute favorite drink and two, JT's hairless cat is named Mr. Pibb. She is the craziest cat ever and I know Casey is laughing hysterically from heaven at her constant antics.

One group that Casey was very involved

with was To Write Love On Her Arms, who made a shirt in his honor with all proceeds benefiting yourself. How has the response been to those shirts, and have you yourself become active with their cause since Casey's passing?

The response to the Heavy and Light shirts was more than I could ever have imagined. I owe so much to Jamie and TWLOHA for all they have done. The money raised from the shirts has allowed me to stay afloat and pay for Casey's funeral expenses. Since Casey did not have life insurance, there is no way I could have managed without TWLOHA's generosity. Their help has allowed me to stay in the house that Casey worked so hard to buy for the both of us. I cannot thank them enough. I was able to be a part of a show in Orlando that they put on called Heavy and Light, where I spoke with JT about Casey's life and his own struggles with depression. Being able to share his story with others who may be struggling with depression was really important to me because I wanted people to realize there is hope out there. TWLOHA is a great organization because I have been around someone who suffered from depression and know how hopeless they can feel when they don't have anywhere to turn. I also teach teenagers so it has been a great way to help some of them see that it is okay to feel this way, that they or not alone, and that it is okay to ask for help.


Can you think of any one story, or just any one thing, that not everyone knows about Casey that, to you, defines who he was?

This is a really hard question to answer because there were so many things that defined who Casey was. He had so many different interests and loves that it is really hard to pinpoint just one thing. I think one thing that shows just how

unique Casey truly was it that in all the people I know who have gotten tattoos in Casey's memory, not one person has gotten the same one. My brother just got a tattoo last week of a sparrow with a mustache because Casey had two sparrows on his arm and he later had an artist add a mustache to one of them, which is exactly like the things Casey did every day. Casey was always open with people and was not afraid to be silly or act like a big kid with whoever he met. I think that is evident by the toy room that Casey insisted on having in both our two bedroom apartment and then in our own home. One thing I have decided is that the toy room is always going to remain where it is today. The collection may not grow much anymore, but the toys he did have are going to stay put. I always used to yell at Casey for spending money on toys and thought they were ridiculous, but now I adore them and it is one room in the house where I can go to really remember Casey in his happiest moments.

Any last things you'd like to say to everyone out there?

I just want to thank EVERYONE who has been so supportive and generous since Casey died. Everyone who made tributes on YouTube or had kind words to say about my husband did not go unnoticed. I never even imagined how many people Casey was able to touch in such a short time and it really has helped me get through this time knowing he made a difference in many people's lives. I also appreciate organizations like Peta2 and TWLOHA for reaching out and sharing Casey's story and remembering him in the ways they have. Casey has allowed me to connect with people I would never know otherwise. Casey had so many amazing friends that he considered family that have been there for me more than I could imagine. ☘



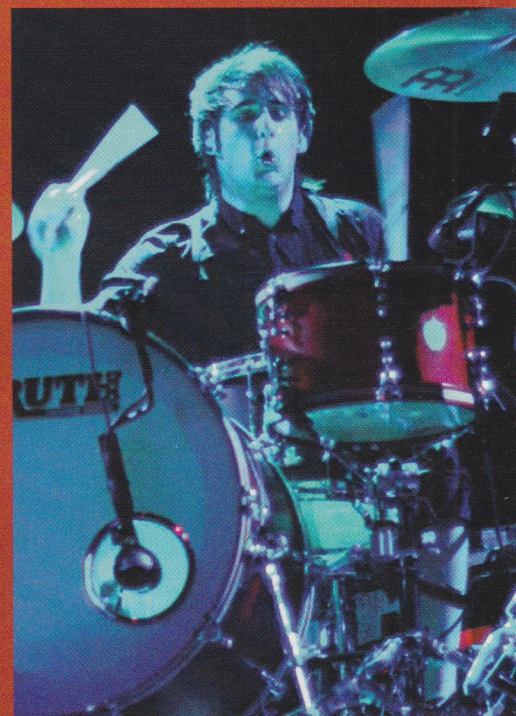
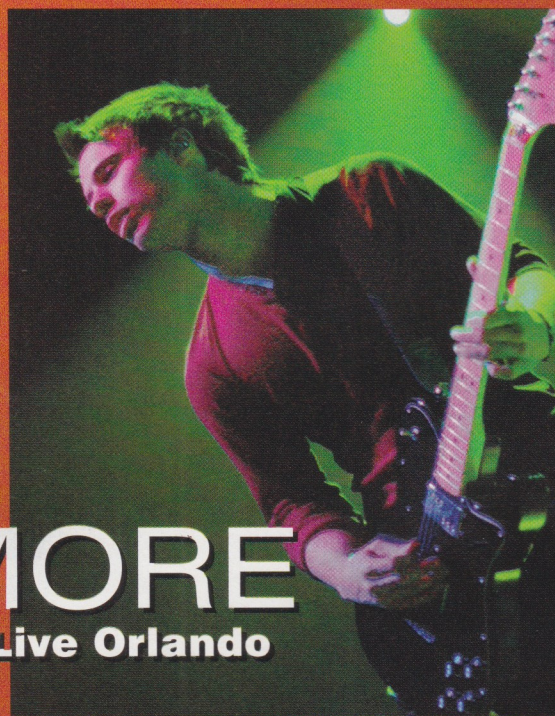
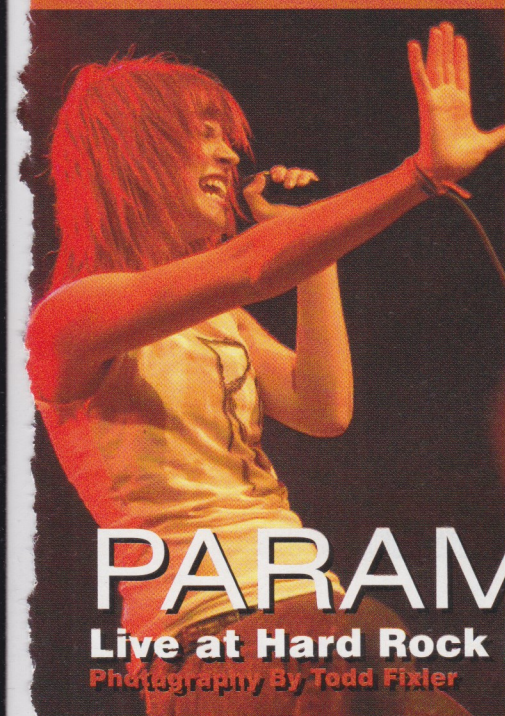
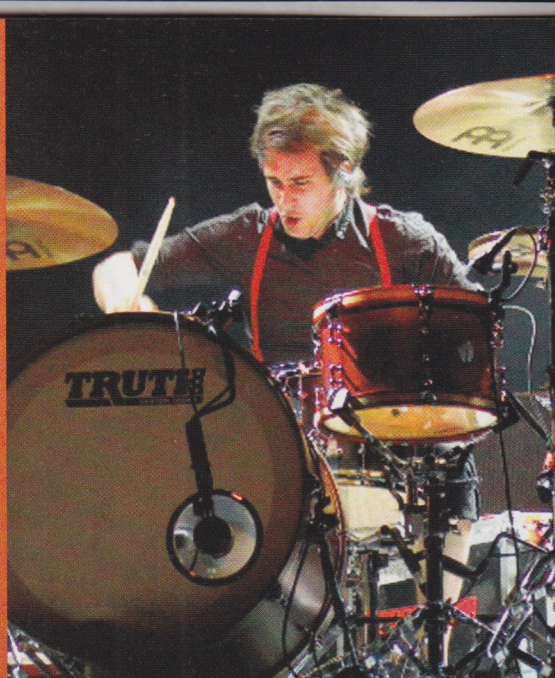
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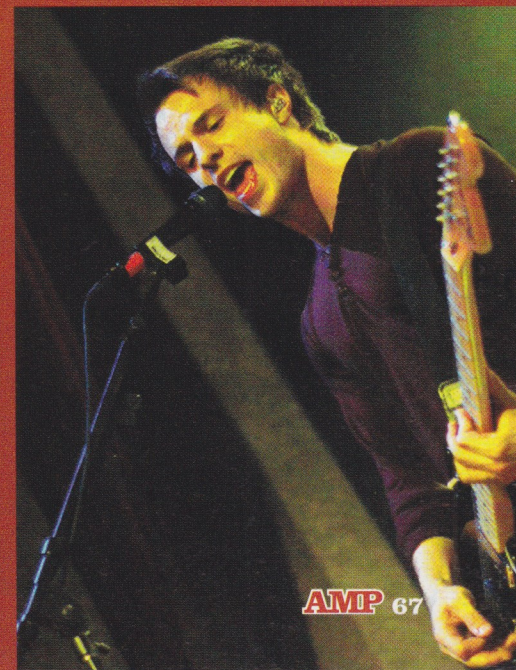
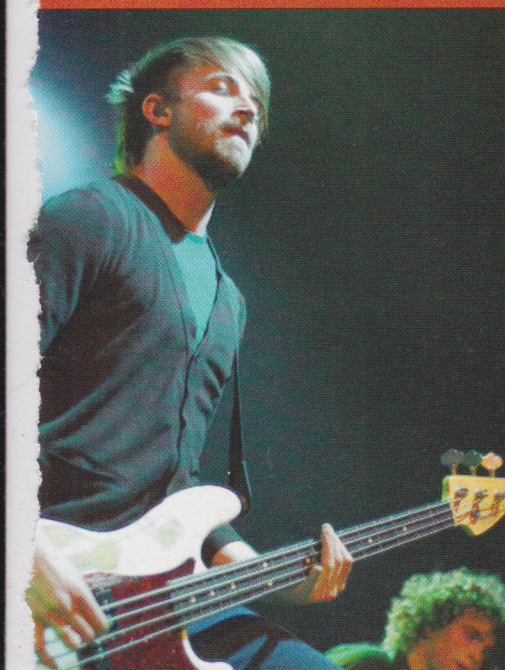
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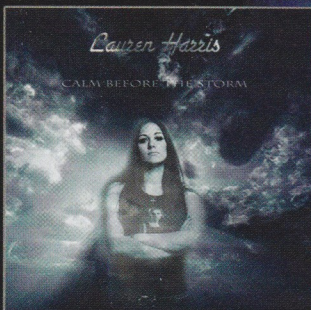
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DOUG BENSON

By JT Habersaat

I write this a mere week after completing the month long national Altercation punk comedy tour, so needless to say brain cells and effortless wit are in short supply. I'm 'punchy' as we call it in the biz, which is laymen's terms for 'sleep deprived, alcohol soaked, fuck you for asking!' A perfect lead in to some additional DIY standup tour slang for the uninitiated:

Metal Up: Stop being such a fuckin' emo kid / suck it up
Curppies: Cuddle herpes
Mamiel: General silence filler / wacky outro to any conversation
What's Up With Stuff?: Hack material
Wacka Wacka: Fozzy callback
Hacka Hacka: A really terrible Fozzy callback
Taking the Bullet: Having the first standup set of the night
Push Dance: To 'mosh'
Shiny Moon Pants: Insane person, particularly at fast food establishments
Fuck that Fucking Guy: Anyone not on tour at that precise moment of conversation
I Will Murder You, Physically: Sincere threat
Meow: I'm out

Knowledge of these terms may save your life one day, so learn them well. It should be noted that I own the copyright on 'metal up', so don't even try it 'guy with DIY screen printing business'...

The tour was amazing, and to all who made it out to the shows we cannot thank you enough. Big ups to all the venues that hosted the gigs, the members of the Murder Junkies, Far From Finished, Toxic Narcotic, M.O.D., Rat City Riot and others that fed us booze, and anyone who lent us a floor to crash on. Extra high five-o to the state trooper in Maine for not busting us. Whew.

For those residing in the Austin, Texas area or looking for a well worthy road trip, do what you need to (cheat on your taxes, sell a puppy, download an MP3, etc.) to attend the 1st ever Altercation Punk Comedy Festival on June 28th at club Red 7. The show is co-sponsored by the awesome folks at AMP and hosted by yours truly, so you know it's gotta be rad. Over a dozen of the nation's best underground standup comics appearing on one stage, including performers from Warped Tour, Comedy Central and more. And it's all ages. So rent 'License to Drive' and take a clue from the two Corey's by stealing a car, dating Heather Graham and delving into a life of addiction. Or something.

Like I said, I'm punchy...anyway, be there or be a geometric shape.

Odds are good you are familiar with our featured subject Doug Benson from his high profile work on 'Best Week Ever' and 'Last Comic Standing', or his appearances alongside the Comedians of Comedy tour. The more illicit among you may even recognize him (vaguely, in a haze) as 'High Times' recent "Stoner of the Year", an honor that inevitably led to his recent film 'Super High Me' in which he attempts to sample an impressive variety of cannabis over the span of a month. In a nutshell, I'm amazed he

remembered we had an interview.

You've obviously been associated strongly with weed culture before making 'Super High Me'. Are you ever worried that your affinity for pot might overshadow your actual comedy material to the point where people view you as just a Tommy Chong-ish persona?

No, worrying is for people who don't smoke pot. (Laughs)

(Laughs) Ha! Did any of the behind-the-scenes people at 'Best Week Ever' take issue with you making the film? Any fallout?

The peeps at 'BWE' have been totally cool. They even



promoted the play, book and CD versions of "The Marijuana-logues," which I co-wrote and performed with Tony Camin and Arj Barker.

Do you think 'Super High Me' has increased your profile in terms of comedy clubs and gigging?

Not yet. So far it has only increased my profile in the world of illegal downloads. But I'm okay with that. As long as people are seeing the movie, it's cool.

Having sampled so many strains of weed for the film, were you able to decide upon a hands-down overall favorite? Or did it vary depending upon your mood?

Let's just say that outside of dirtweed, I've met very few strains I didn't like. And even dirtweed is okay if it's the only option!

Have you heard anything from the camp behind 'Supersize Me', positive or negative?

First of all, if there was a Supersize Me Camp, I would totally go there. McGriddles every morning! But supposedly Morgan Spurlock doesn't have a problem with 'Super High Me'. What he doesn't know is, I'm going to rip-off every film he makes from now on, just adding a pot element to each one. My next movie is going to be "Where In The World Is Osama Bin Laden With My Weed."

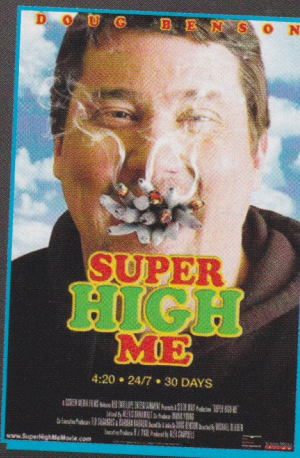
(Laughs) How did you get your start in standup? Any memorable early bombs? I bombed a lot, and still do on occasion, but I tend to forget about the bad shows. My first set ever was on a pot luck night in Los Angeles. I got some laughs, so I've been doing it ever since.

I know you've done some shows with the Comedians of Comedy crew but still primarily tour on the club circuit. Do you feel more comfortable in that setting as opposed to say a rock venue?

I'm comfortable in any venue where people come to laugh. Theaters are my favorite, because they are more focused than nightclubs. The worst gigs are the ones where people aren't necessarily there for comedy. Opening for bands can be a bitch.

How did you get your start on 'Best Week Ever'?

I was doing The 'M-Logues' in New York, and my agent got me an audition. An audition for that show means basically doing the show one week, and then if they call you back the next week, you're in. They've been calling me every week ever since, except one week when they forgot to call - I thought I was fired!



As a fellow standup comic, I know that the scene can sometimes breed jealousy. Have you encountered any peer envy, especially since your involvement on 'Last Comic Standing'? Do you care?

If anyone is jealous of me, they have kept it to themselves. One thing I like about stand-up comedy is hanging out with other comedians. Most of my friends are comics, and I wouldn't want it any other way. I like laughing as much as making others laugh. I don't need to always be the

center of attention.

Speaking of 'LCS', on an evil scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate the experience?

(Laughs) 10 being most evil? A 2 or 3. The exposure that show gave me was worth a little embarrassment. As reality shows go, it could've been a lot worse.

That does it for this round, kids. See you next issue, and catch up on all of the latest in the meantime at myspace.com/standuppunk. Be sure and stop by the Altercation booth on this summer's Warped Tour so I can wave my cane at you and tell you what's wrong with your generation. And stay off my grass... thanks Doug! K

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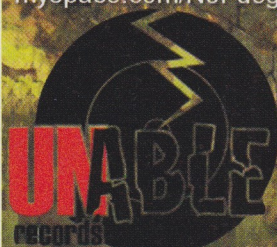
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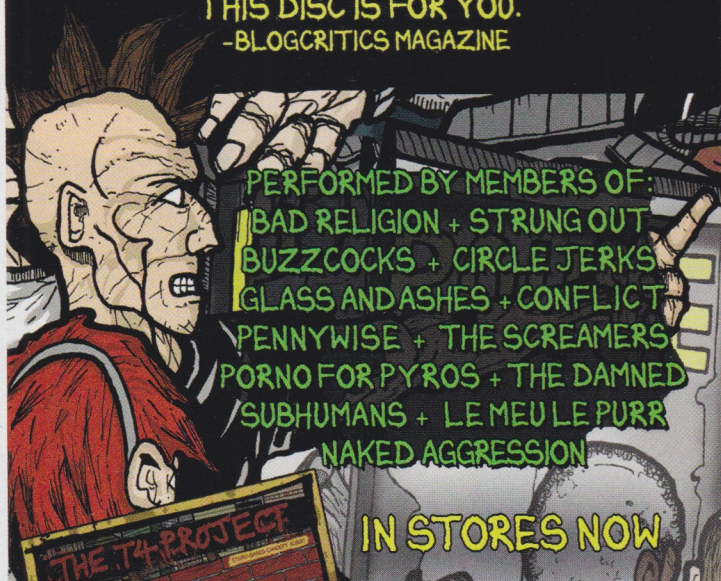


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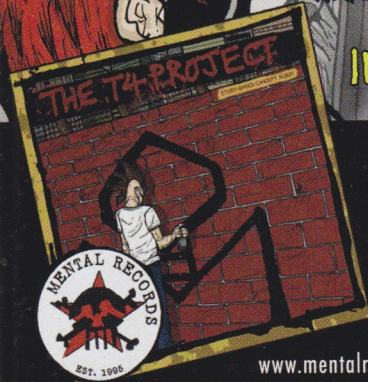
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BLASÉ DEBRIS

Interview By Nick Dowd / Photos Courtesy Of Altercation Records

East coast horror punkers Blasé Debris' reputation has been simmering within the underground scene for a few years now, gaining them fans within such legendary acts as the Misfits, Blitzkid and Gogol Bordello. But with the recent release of their new epic album 'Morfiend' on Altercation Records, and a slot on numerous dates of this summer's Vans Warped Tour alongside The Bronx, Against Me! and Horrorpops, it seems as if their unleashing upon the mainstream masses seems inevitable.

With a live show second to none, and a dose of new material that is easily their heaviest yet, the boys of Blasé are primed to scare the pants off the unsuspecting summer hordes. The band emerged from their crypts recently for an insightful interview.

I know

you guys

are closely identified with the horror punk scene, but your new album seems a lot heavier, more metal-leaning in sound, would you agree?

Duane (vocals): I've always felt the "horror punk" scene covered large ground. From the Lords of the New Church to Type O Negative, Gwar and everything in between. If our new album 'Morfiend' sounds

or seems heavier that is fine with us. If it sounded lighter and more pop-leaning then that would be fine with us as well. It's important to me that it sounds like Blasé Debris. And that, I'm certain it does. To say we are a punk metal band is fair. I can hear a 90's metal influence in our music. But we are certainly not 80's metal, nu-metal, or anything like that!

Rachel (guitar): 'Morfiend' is definitely a bit more metal at times than 'Creep Cool', but it wasn't altogether a conscious decision. The album pretty much came together with a life of its own. We all breathe our own influences into the songs, and that's what makes it sound the way it does. As far as identifying with the horror-punks, that is something we kinda fell into. Besides us being huge fans of The Misfits, I have found that the horror-punk fans are much more embracing of different genres. Musically it gives us a lot of room to play around with, and since





"We're never gonna appeal to everyone nor do we want to, but for the person who sees us for the first time and says to themselves 'Hell yeah! Now *that's* what I'm talking about, this is what I've been waiting for!'...that kind of reaction hits home with us."

we don't fit comfortably into either metal or punk categories it seems to work pretty well. Plus, it's a blast to play different styles and mix it up. It keeps it dangerous...you never know where we might take you!

Are you fans of bands that mix metal and gothic elements, like White Zombie?

Billy (bass): For sure. I really loved White Zombie, especially when the first one came out. Life of Agony was a huge influence on me...Type O and of course growing up on Black Sabbath...

Duane (vocals): I've always liked White Zombie's music, but it was the imagery that really drew me in. I have a lot of respect for Rob Zombie. His work is to be commended. Nothing comes easy and he's done real well for himself. Cheers to him.

Have you seen your audience increase since the release of your last album leading up to this new one? I've seen your name around quite a lot lately.

Sewers (drums): We have a really great label with Altercation, they tend to deliver and we dare to be different.

Duane (vocals): We're a crossover band to dye for. We really do appeal to a wide variety of people and hell, we appreciate everyone for their support. The entertainment value in America is through the roof and I think a lot of people gave up on live music when it became sterile, drab, and in some cases, just too far over the top. I think we are far more real. We're never gonna appeal to everyone nor do we want to, but for the person who sees us for the first time and says to themselves "Hell yeah! Now that's what I'm talking about, this is what I've been waiting for!"...that kind of reac-

tion hits home with us.

I hear you recently switched up the lineup a bit...

Rachel (guitar): Duane is an awesome singer as well as an awesome guitarist. Since the departure of 2nd guitarist Earl Quartz, we have had to fill in the empty space, so to speak. With Duane on guitar the rhythm is full, but he has had to sacrifice a bit of being "the frontman" which has changed how he interacts with the audience. Ideally, we would like to find someone to fill Earl's shoes, but we haven't found anyone suitable yet.

You're doing a bunch of dates on Warped Tour this summer. Are you excited to be a part of such a long and well-established tour?

Duane (vocals): We're honored. To say we're excited would be an understatement. We're really looking forward to it.

Do you think your horror-leaning sound will translate ok during the daylight on an outside stage? Do you employ a lot of smoke and light theatrics within your live set?

Billy (bass): Bands like AFI didn't seem to have a problem. Granted, I'd rather play in the dark but I think the energy comes through no matter what. The fog and lights will be missed though... (Laughs)

Duane (vocals): We'd be far more comfortable playing under the moon light. I'm sure we'll do just fine though, SPF 69 to the rescue. (Laughs) We do dig theatrics as long as they are used sparingly. Setting an atmosphere is an important part of your identity. So, smoke and lights, yes. Smoke and mirrors, no.

Rachel (guitar): We really work hard to

make the live shows as energetic and as exciting as possible. Fog and lights are fun and a good effect, but we don't ever rely on them. We just give 'em the best show we can.

Any Warped bands you are particularly psyched to be touring alongside?

Duane (vocals): Yeah, I'm really looking forward to checking out Revolution Mother. The Bouncing Souls and The Street Dogs are a gimmie, and how in the world can the Horrorpops not be a good time?

Rachel (guitar): Street Dogs for sure!


I hear you recorded with members of the Misfits recently. How did that come about? Were they cool to work with?

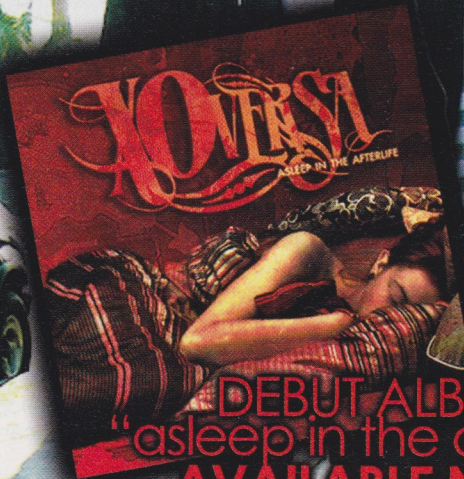
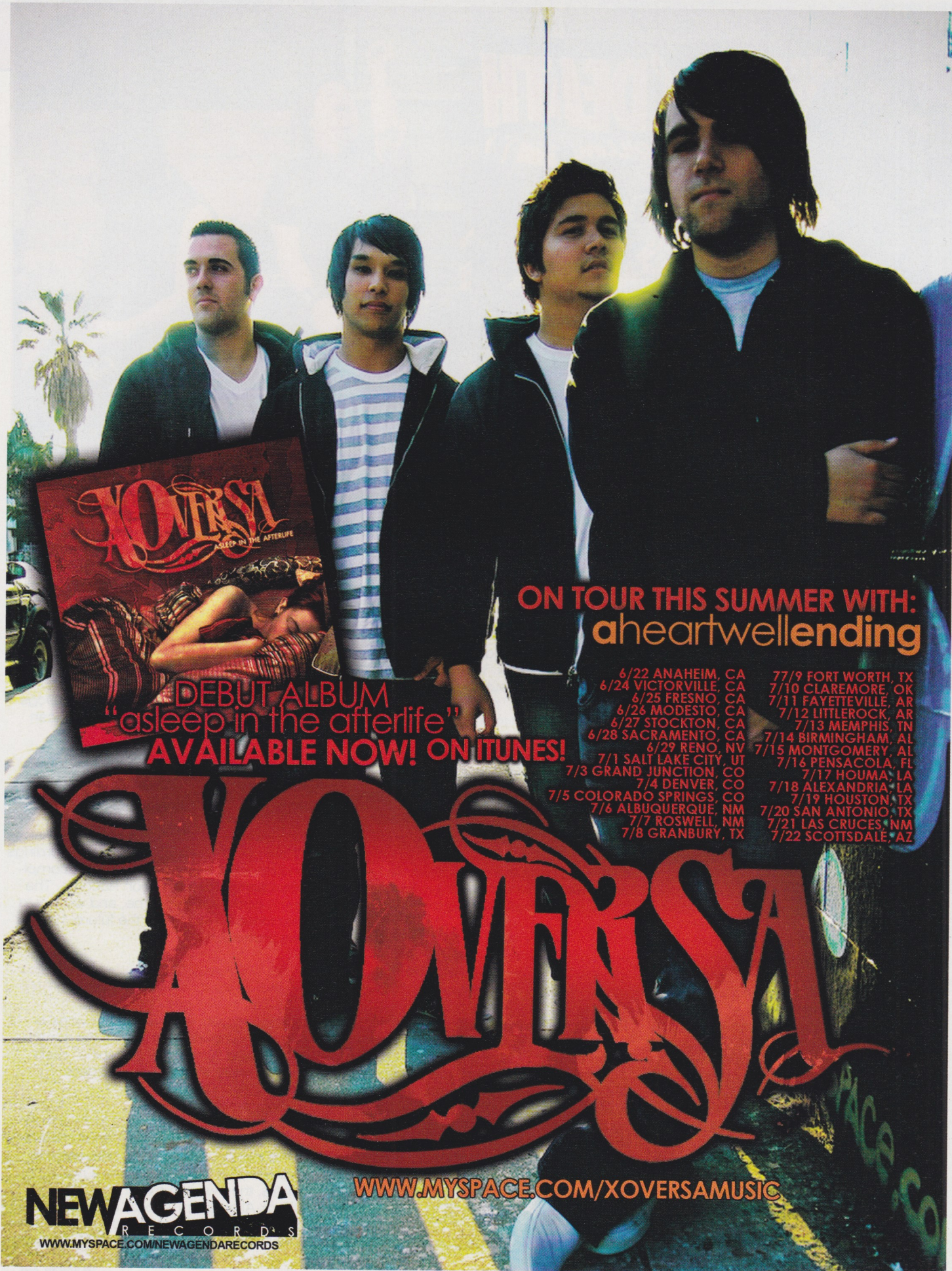
Sewers (drums): Their old singer Michale Graves liked some of our earlier recordings and decided to produce our '666' compilation songs for Altercation Records. The guy is cool as cool can be, and we would love to work with him in the future, he's a real professional.

I was impressed by the video included on the new album. Do you plan to do a new video anytime soon?

Duane (vocals): I'd love to do a video or two off the new album. I think the songs "Lolita" and "Flat Black Sunshine" really lend themselves to a visual aspect.

Any parting words for fans?

Duane (vocals): If you're not familiar with us and you think you might appreciate a band that bridges the gap between the Cramps and Motorhead with a nod to the Misfits, then we just might be that band. Check AltercationRecords.com for updates, see you on the Warped Tour, stay ghoul, creep cool and cheers! 



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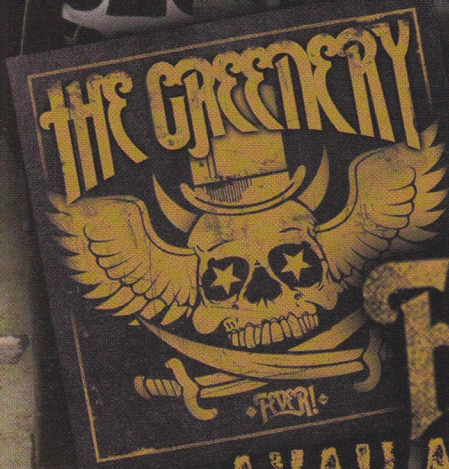
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7/20 OGDEN, UT
7/21 GRAND JUNCTION, CO
7/22 COLORADO SPRINGS, CO
7/23 ALBUQUERQUE, NM
7/24 BURLESON, TX
7/25 TULSA, OK
7/26 WARRENSBURG, MO
7/28 MINNEAPOLIS, MN
7/29 CHICAGO, IL
7/30 GRAND RAPIDS, MI
7/31 CLEVELAND, OH
8/1 BUFFALO, NY

8/2 PITTSBURGH, PA
8/3 RICHMOND, VA
8/4 AUGUSTA, GA
8/5 GAINESVILLE, FL
8/6 HOUMA, LA
8/7 CORPUS CHRISTI, TX
8/8 MCALLEN, TX
8/9 SAN ANTONIO, TX
8/10 DALLAS, TX
8/11 WICHITA FALLS, TX
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DESIGNER DRUGS

INTERVIEW WITH SINGER EMILY AND BANDMATES RODNEY, JUSTON AND DAIN

By Philip Hicks / Photos by Altercation Records

Hype for a young band can be as negative as it can be positive, but for New York's the Designer Drugs one thing is certain - it is richly deserved. Combining fierce female vocals with a strange but insanely addictive melting pot of glam, punk and rockabilly, the band's sound is truly hard to define but undeniably great. With their eagerly anticipated debut album 'By RX Only' hitting shelves this summer on Altercation Records, and a number of high profile festivals including the Coney Island Rockabilly Fest on tap for the coming months, Designer Drugs seem destined to make addicts of us all.

I got an advance of your new album and have to say I was pretty blown away. How long have you been a band? This is your first album, correct?

Rodney: First off, thanks for the compliment! The band originally formed about 3 years ago with a line up of which I am the only remaining member. Emily started singing a year and a half ago, and Dain, Juston and Barry came to us this past fall. This is indeed our first full length album, and we're all very excited about it!

Your songs tend to cover fairly primal topics like sex, violence, booze and the like. Do you think that is a natural reaction against other popular female fronted 'punk' bands such as Paramore, etc? Or do you just naturally gravitate towards that subject matter? What are your thoughts on the current trend of more pop-leaning punk acts?

Emily: Well, I must confess that, in my opinion, our two most intense songs 'Coke in the Bathroom' and 'Victory and Violence' were written by Juston, our bass player, and not by me. He wrote them a



long time before he joined this band. I did still write 8 of the 11 vocal tracks, and I do think I tend to be a bit harsh with my words. I'm definitely not doing it to simply go against the grain, I'm just naturally a very intense, passionate person. It's all about the ID! (Laughs) As far as more 'pop-leaning' punk acts, well I kinda think a lotta our songs are quite poppy! So maybe we're one of them! But what I will say is this, to me, pop music is like candy, and we all enjoy a piece of candy now and again, it's delicious. But for the majority of the time, we go for the more substantial healthy stuff, that's what you need to thrive.

There also seems to be a fair amount of affinity with 'classic' punk CBGB's-era bands such as The Avengers and Plasmatics. Are you fans of those types of bands?

Rodney: I'm definitely a fan of the CBGBs, 70s era punk bands like The Dead Boys, The New York Dolls, The Heartbreakers and UK bands like The Damned and The Clash. Musically, that is the well I dip into for inspiration, and that's definitely the direction I wanted to take this band. Other bands like The Avengers and The Plasmatics, although they are great, we never really listened to much until the comparisons started coming in. But all these bands come from that same amazing time for underground music, we wish we could've been around to experience that first hand.

Glam also seems to creep into your imagery. Is that a term you feel comfortable with?

Rodney: YES!

Emily: Rodney is a glam as the day is long.

Dain: Oh totally! That's been a big staple of the bands sound right from the get go.

Juston: We cover "The Time Warp" on occasion. Enough said.

I see from your myspace page that you have a lot of club dates and festival shows on tap for the summer. Do you prefer one over the other? Is it more fun to 'stretch' within the confines of a dark nightclub versus playing with a ton of other bands in the open air?

Dain: It doesn't matter, really. It's just great to be able to get out there and show people what you've got. The way I look at it is that I just have to be thankful to be able to be playing in front of anyone, period.

It felt like the new album contains a ton of 'hits', which is pretty impressive. Is there a particular track that you are most proud of?

Emily: Wow, thanks, that's really flattering. I know Rodney and I have grown attached to all of the songs we wrote in different ways. For me to pick one, that's like asking me to choose a favorite of my children, I can't do that! (Laughs)
Juston: I am really impressed with the

"I do think I tend to be a bit harsh with my words. I'm definitely not doing it to simply go against the grain, I'm just naturally a very intense, passionate person."



songs we wrote together, and of which were completed in the studio. The first time I heard Emily sing "Victory and Violence" was our first take in the studio, and I nearly lost it because I had no idea the song could sound so intense.

This is your first release on Altercation Records, correct? How did you end up getting signed?

Emily: Yes! This is our first release on Altercation Records. We were signed last fall, right before Dain, Juston and Barry joined, after we just got off a 7-week U.S. tour booked almost entirely by Rodney. I think that sure helped to persuade the guys at the label to wanna sign us. We also have to give a shout out to Duane

Beer of the band Blase Debris. When Duane heard the demo we recorded last spring, he passed it on to Altercation and they immediately contacted us. The rest, as they say, is history.

Any parting words for fans?

Emily: We love playing live for you guys, it's what we live for, so you all come on out to see us when we play your town! Keep checking AltercationRecords.com for all of our tour dates!

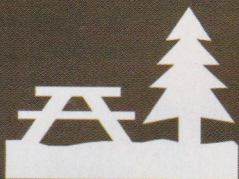
Dain: Buy the album while you can! It will probably end up selling out everywhere like Tickle Me Elmo and you'll have to buy it on Ebay for way too much money! (Laughs) Thanks so much for all your support and we'll see you on the road. ✎



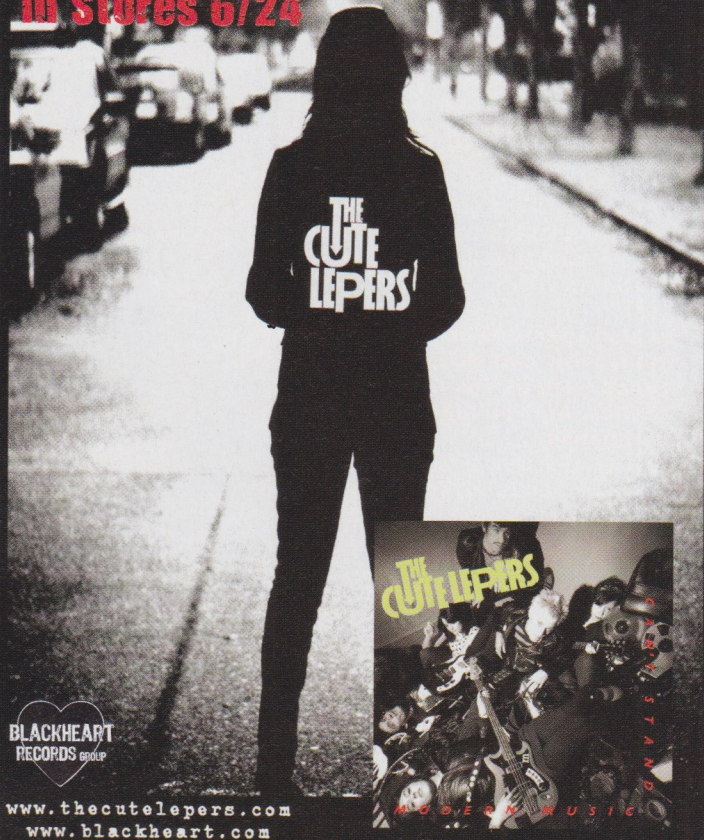
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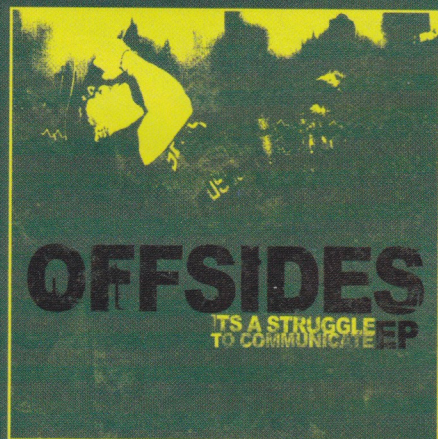


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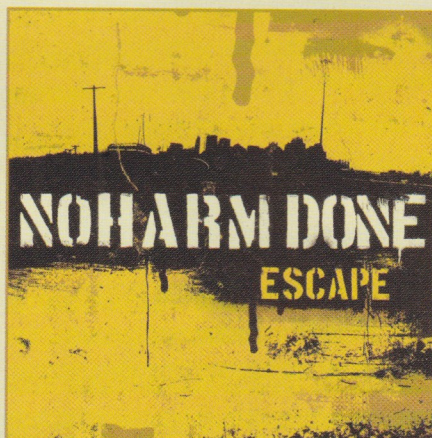


OFFSIDES
IT'S A STRUGGLE
TO COMMUNICATE EP

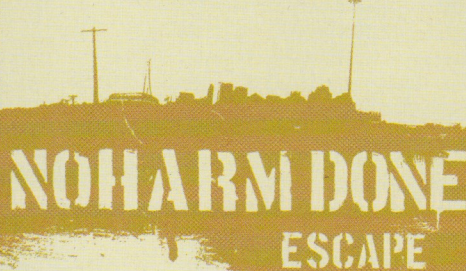


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on Get Outta Town Records

A departure from their demo and 7" split with RIPS HIT, this
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sound; complete with emotional lyrics and catchy choruses.



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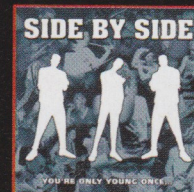
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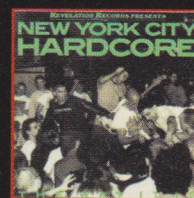


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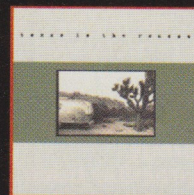
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SUPER POWERS

IF YOU COULD HAVE ANY SUPER POWER, WHAT WOULD IT BE, AND WHY?



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAT WRECK

Todd - PROPAGANDHI

I would get stronger and stronger as I got madder and madder so that one day I could be the Sakaarson.

Rory - AMERICAN STEEL

We've always joked that we would want to be Procreation Man. Who, can decide whom is able to have children or not. This superhero would make the world a better place within a generation. That's truly using your power for good.

Martin - DOWN AND AWAY

The super-power that makes you tour in the States.

Jon Hunt - DEAD TO FALL

Time Travel. I think it might be a bad idea to give me that kind of responsibility though. One slip up and oh whoops I destroyed the fabric of time. Fuck!

Adam - THE ARCHITECTS

X-Ray eyeballs (for Boobie-Vision)

Mikey Hawkins - YEARS FROM NOW

Flight or teleportation.

Brandon Mullins - singer ACROSS FIVE APRILS

Invisibility duh.

Ben Crew - IN DEFENCE

If I had super powers I would be a Jedi Knight like Luke Skywalker. Maybe that's cheating because Jedi Knights have so many different types of powers but Star Wars is awesome!

Charles - Get Outta Town Records / Make or Break / No Harm Done / Trample / Gator Bait / Offsides

The power to not be broke would be cool. I think if I had a real power, teleportation would be amazing. Not just Nightcrawler teleporting where it's like to the other side of the room, but instead of taking a 20 hour van ride where ever I could leave two seconds before we're supposed to play and BAM! I'm on stage and ready to go.



RORY
AMERICAN STEEL

Doug Hill - co-owner of Mental Records and member of NOTHING ERROR

The ability to render people speechless. So I can stop hearing people say that bands have "sold out."

Jordan Topf - gtr/vox - THE VOX JAGUARS

To be able to morph and have t-rex arms.

Dave House - THE STEAL

I think everyone dreams about being able to be able to fly. That's definitely a useful power.

Ryan - INCOMMUNICADO

I would like to have the ability to make other people lose control of their bodily functions. That way, when someone pisses me off, I could just make them piss and shit their pants while vomiting uncontrollably. That would be awesome!

Greg - THE SWINGIN UTTERS

Mind control so I could wise up people to stop hurting each other and the planet.

Ryan Clark - DEMON HUNTER

The ability to stop time. There's never enough time in the day. I would love to squeeze another 5 or 6 hours out of each day.

Maik Weichert (Guitarist) - HEAVEN SHALL BURN

I think turning water into wine would impress a lot of friends backstage and as I don't drink there would be no danger of abusing this power. Any other superpower would be a curse and not bliss. As you can see in the X-men movies...

Chris Bonner - THE BACKSIDERS

The Soviet Union for all the right reasons.

Steve Stevens - BILLY IDOL

To play guitar at the speed of light and challenge DRAGONFORCE to a duel!

Darrell Roberts - FIVE FINGER DEATH PUNCH

Being able to fly would be pretty cool.



MAIK WEICHERT
HEAVEN SHALL BURN

Matt Traynor - BLESSTHEFALL

Fly. I hate traffic and driving. I would go everywhere!

David McWane - BIG D

It would be the ability to take violent thoughts of all kinds out of people and replace it with the drive to become educated to create and invent for the common good of all. Heavy huh?

Adam Vass - LA DISPUTES

The super power I would want is to be able to learn things by osmosis. It would just make education so much easier and less painful. I don't know how I've made it this far in my life learning traditionally.

Jim Mandel - SMALL LEAKS SINKS SHIPS

To pause and rewind and fast-forward time. I would love to say things to people and see their reaction and then just rewind and do over.

Jim Domenici - THE FAKE BOYS (www.myspace.com/thefakeboys)

Sheesh, probably the power to sleep on command. I am an insomniac and it's really getting to me. I've never heard of a superhero who just "slept" for his/her super-power but... I'm sure we could work on that if anyone is interested.

Scott - ENDGAME

Well, the ability to travel through time would obviously be cool, but would probably get annoying after a while since you can't die. So realistically speaking, I'd probably go with x-ray vision for obvious perverse reasons.

"The Legend" Keenan Nichols (Lead Guitar) - ARCHITECTS

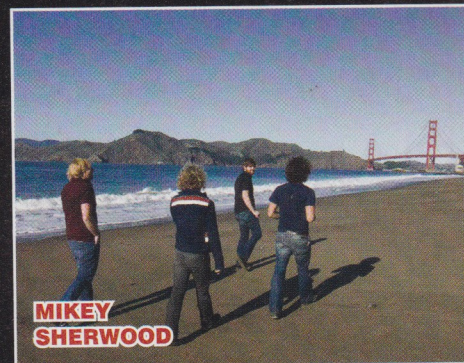
I would really dig the shit out of being able to teleport! I'd be like "Fuck! K.C. is cold! I think I'll hop on over to Santorini for a swim and some musaka" and skwibbily doo! There I am in Greece!

Vesod Williams - PEPPER

Fly, it would make touring way easier.



DUSTIN
WALLS OF JERICO



MIKEY
SHERWOOD

Mikey - SHERWOOD

Hmmm, I guess it would probably be the ability to fly. I think man has always had a fascination with flying. That and perhaps invisibility. I could invisibly fly!

Cassandra Ford - THE VINCENT BLACK SHADOW

I would get random peoples inside jokes.

Bryan - THE BOUNCING SOULS

The ability to speak to animals. Cuz I love them so much.

Jayson Bittner (drummer) - SHADOWSFALL

Being able to split myself in two so I could always be on tour, and home at the same time!!!

Kevin - ONE SMALL STEP FOR LANDMINES

Hands down, invisibility would come in more handy than any other super power. You're creeping and lurking skills/habits would no longer be limited to Myspace.

Robert Rivera (drummer) - NONPOINT

I would not mind being Superman. I could fly and destroy everything in sight and still get the hot chick.

Chris Neighbor - GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY

Invisibility for sure...I'd rob banks, sneak onto planes, fuck with ballot boxes and scare the shit out of people for fun.

Josh Youngson (Vocals) - SICK CITY

It would be to maintain my vocal supremacy. Or flying... or both.

Rody Walker - PROTEST THE HERO

Invisibility... there's so many perks to being invisible.. You can see anyone naked you want.

Iggor - CAVALERA CONSPIRACY

Bring people back to life, so I can have some people who are missing, back.

Patrick - LIMBECK

This is always a tough question. But I think I'd go with flying. It'd be easy to get places, and if I was walking around and got lost, I could just fly up in the air and get the view from the sky. I hope that my bad equilibrium wouldn't affect my skill at flying...

PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER GEORGE

Dave Wright (singer) - HEADWAY

For me it would be a toss up between Invincibility and Invisability. Invisability would be good as long as you could turn it off, but the thought of never being able to get hurt is very appealing and could be lots of fun! I'm going for Invincibility.

JD - SHIPWRECK

To be able to breathe underwater so I could be half fish. I would be able to swim awesome and show off. I could swim down to the bottom of the sea and look for treasure or wrecks or wild sea urchins. The best part would be when the ice caps melt and the world is covered in water (i.e. 'Waterworld' scenario) I would be able to survive because I would be the first evolutionary step to man adapting to nature.

Jay Pepito - REIGN SUPREME

Super wealth, so I could have a nice house instead of crashing on my friend's couch between tours.

Ryan Patterson - COLISEUM

When I was a kid I wanted X-ray vision to be able to see naked girls, of course. These days, mind control would be pretty sweet. I'd go to Washington and fuck shit up.

Dustin (Drums) - WALLS OF JERICO

UHH I'm not sure this is a super power but I would have my own theme music wherever I went... and it would be Jann Hammers Miami Vice theme song. And that's pronounced (Ya'hn).

Andy - A PLEA FOR PURGING

My gas would me so powerful it acted as a jet stream and I could shoot off into the sky like Rocketman.

Danny Lilker - BRUTAL TRUTH

I'd like to banish people that annoy me to a fiery abyss.

Rick Jimenez (Vocals) - SOLDIERS

I always thought about this and wanted to have Avalanche (villain from the x-books) power, which was creating shock waves and such...the reason I chose this is because he could fuck up the ground people are standing under and it inconspicuous or you could straight up send the shock waves to something or someone...its multi-purposeful. As I get older though, I would probably pick teleporting because I waste so much time in transit. That, or stopping time so I could spend a few hours relaxing everyday without actually using minutes on the clock.

Chad Rapper - HAUNTED LIFE / EXPIRED YOUTH / ONE FOOT IN THE GRAVE

I would want to be invisible so I could sneak into banks and take their money so we could tour non-stop.

Daniel - BLOOD RED THRONE

Mindreader! Then I would know all the filthy thoughts women fantasize about, hehe!

Shannon Saint Ryan - THE T4 PROJECT

SSR Man, that's a tough one. I suppose the most common belief is that only the United States fulfills the criteria to be considered a superpower, but then again, The People's Republic of China, India, the European Union, Russia, and other candidates appear to have the potential of achieving superpower status within the 21st Century. I think I'll wait and see before deciding.



PHOTO: KK GOODMAN

PESKY
FAR FROM FINISHED

Pesky (Bassist) - FAR FROM FINISHED

Is playing a musical instrument proficiently a super power?

Ryan O'Connor - OUTBREAK

Seeing into the future would make many aspects of my life much easier. Is that even a super power or did I make that up? I guess all super powers are made up, so I answered my own question, how embarrassing.

Mark Borst-Smith (Bass/Keyboards/Vocals) - A CURSIVE MEMORY

Time travel is the greatest super-power ever. Even though flying is a close second, I would have to choose time travel just because I could go back in time. I think I'm more interested in the past rather than the future, so I would probably spend most of my time with people like Ben Franklin, John Lennon, Churchill, Aristotle, and probably Jesus. But I mean, I would also take a few peeks in the future just to get an idea of what's to come... See who's the president, the next big invention, the newest ice cream flavors... stuff like that.

Wayne - GRAVE MAKER

My super power would be to turn into any water dwelling creature. There's no end to the things I could discover cruising around the oceans.

Travis - CRASH ROMEO

Flying would be a cool super-power. Just think; you wouldn't need a car. Therefore, you wouldn't have to pay for gas. You know how much money you would save? Haha.

Travis Weber - CRASH ROMEO

Being invisible would be cool, I think being places where people can't see you would be awesome; you can rob banks, scare people, etc. You could pretty much do anything you want.

THE SECRETIONS!

A four-hour erection that DOESN'T require consulting your physician.

Eric Gerloff (guitarist) - RED I FLIGHT

To teleport people and items, so we could skip long drive times and having to load heavy equipment.



PHOTO: SCOTT HARRISON

KEITH BUCKLEY
EVERY TIME I DIE

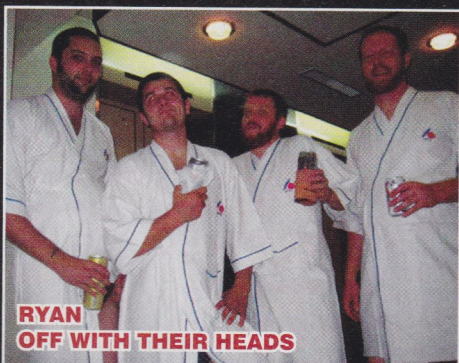


PHOTO: SCOTT HARRISON

RYAN
OFF WITH THEIR HEADS

BILL WARD of BLACK SABBATH

I'm already super-powered. I'm in my 25th year of being sober in a 12 step program. Why? Because I don't want what I used to have.

Wops (Guitarist) WOLFPACK UNLEASHED

Superman's speed, so I can chop chords at tempo 9000. Also, I would be so fast I could go take a piss while playing one chord on stage, and I'd be back to play the next one without people noticing. Something that normally only works for doom-bands.

Chase Morgan (the brand-new vocalist) HURTLOCKER

The ability to fly. It would save tons on airfare plus I would love to just dive bomb at shit.

Greg Strong - AMBER PACIFIC

Teleport. I'd love to be able to instantly be able to hangout with any of my friends around the country or go catch a sweet show anywhere in the world.

Erik Larson - ALABAMA THUNDERPUSSY

I've thought about this long and hard. My super power would be to understand and speak fluently every language and dialect on the planet. That way I would know how to say "METALLICA sucks now" to anyone, anywhere and friendships could be had because no matter how you say it, it's true in every language.

Richie Gregor (Drummer) - FAREWELL TO FREEWAY

I would have to say that I would want to have X-Ray Vision so I can see through ANYTHING I wanted! Or maybe it would be cooler to be able to move things with my mind! Those are both pretty cool powers!



PHOTO: DAVE HILL

GREG STRONG
AMBER PACIFIC

Brian Hobbie - CATASTROPHIC

The power to bring back the way people in the states went about buying and supporting music. Definitely would like to see more record stores around the shows would have better turn-outs I feel. Maybe the ability to improve the economy, helping others have more money to buy more merch from touring bands, attend more shows as well.

Ryan - OFF WITH THEIR HEADS

Obviously invisibility. I would never work another day in my life. Imagine all possibilities of crime you could get away with. Anything.

Brendan - CIRCA SURVIVE

If I could have any super power it would be the ability to heal people with my hands. I have a lot of physical pain myself and nothing feels better than having a massage from someone who knows what they are doing. But that just scratches the surface. I want to be able to cure cancer to end suffering everywhere. I can understand death. I can see its purpose in the grand scheme of things but suffering makes no sense to me.

Kevin - SOCRATIC

The abilities of Superman, because lets face it he is the ultimate super power character. He can fly, has x-ray vision, super strength etc. etc... I wouldn't have to ever sit couch again.

Jim Ward - SLEEPERCAR / AT THE DRIVE IN / SPARTA

I think that I would be invisible, that seems like the way to go. If you want to be left alone, boom, you are left alone.

Keith Buckley - EVERY TIME I DIE

To be able to recharge batteries with my mind from across the room.

Raymond Herrera - FEAR FACTORY

The power to clone myself and take on even more business than I currently have, I tend to get shit done right, so a few more of me would be awesome. This may be kind of selfish, but it is true.

Dom - PULLING TEETH

I'd like to control time. Be able to make it slow down and speed up whenever I see fit. 🦷

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DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE

By John B. Moore / Photography By John Joh

Despite having more than half a dozen records under their belt at the time, it seemed like Death Cab for Cutie still had something to prove to the record-buying public after signing to Atlantic Records. Their first major label release, "Plans," not only appeased longtime fans, but brought in a slew of new ones.

The scrutiny gone, Death Cab is prepping their next full length, "Narrow Stairs," a slight departure from the band's customary sound. Though it certainly won't be classified as metal, the guitars are a little louder and the sound a tad more confrontational. That being said, it still sounds very much like a Death Cab record.

Drummer Jason McGerr spoke with AMP recently about the new record, being a drummer for hire and the beauty of nerdy passions.

What can you tell me about the new record, "Narrow Stairs"? It's has been described as more aggressive. How would you describe it?

Adventurous maybe. It's sort of like we raised our voices is an easy way to put it. I've described records in the past as "Transatlanticism" was an inhale and "Plans" was an exhale. Before you take a big leap you need to take a big breath, so this would qualify as that leap or that jump. It's very much a culmination of the live band we have become. I

don't feel like it's this huge, adventurous, bloody crazy thing like everyone seems to quote us as having said, but still it has more teeth.

Having heard it, I think it still sounds very much like a Death Cab record.

That's the thing. All the time you read about bands who say, "We really wanted to go off the rails with this one to be totally different. We secluded ourselves for 18 months..." Whenever I read those stories and buy the record, I want to say, "Yeah buddy, it still sounds like your band." You can't ever stretch that far from who you are as a band. Ben (Gibbard) sound like Ben and the songs sound like Death Cab songs and



the production sounds like a Chris Walla record. But it has, hopefully, bits and pieces of everything we have done in the past as a band as well as some new things. Some different energy and it is very much coming from more of a live performance perspective rather than a very surgically composed album.

So Chris produced this one as well?

Chris did produce this one. He is the producer. He definitely has the whole thing in mind, the road map, and how it's going to come together. We all chime in and we all self-produce our own parts, but he's credited as the producer. The only difference with this album as opposed to the last is that we brought in another engineer; the guy who does front of house with us when we play live. His name is Will Markwell. We wanted Chris to be playing guitar more than sitting behind the counsel this time and it allowed us to capture more of that full band live sound. It was still very much produced by Walla, but it was nice to have one more set of ears in the room that we trust, but that could also be transparent when necessary.

Do you have a favorite track on the record yet?

I like a lot of the songs for different reasons. I think "Grapevine Fires" is one of the best songs Ben has ever written, but I love the energy we captured on "Long Division. It's one of the more fun songs to play live.

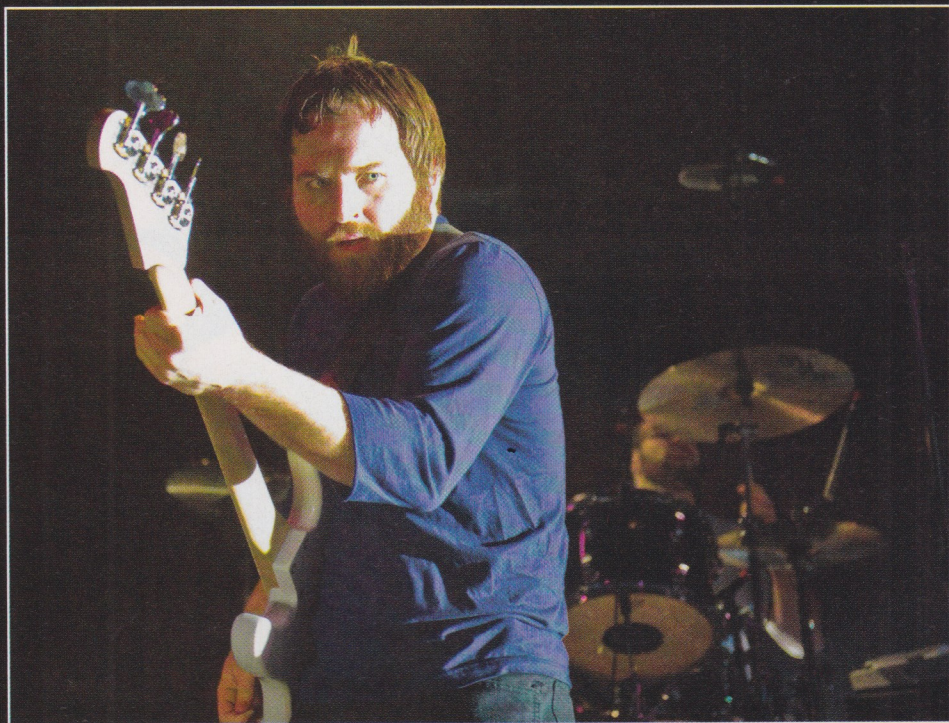
Have you started playing all of the songs live yet?

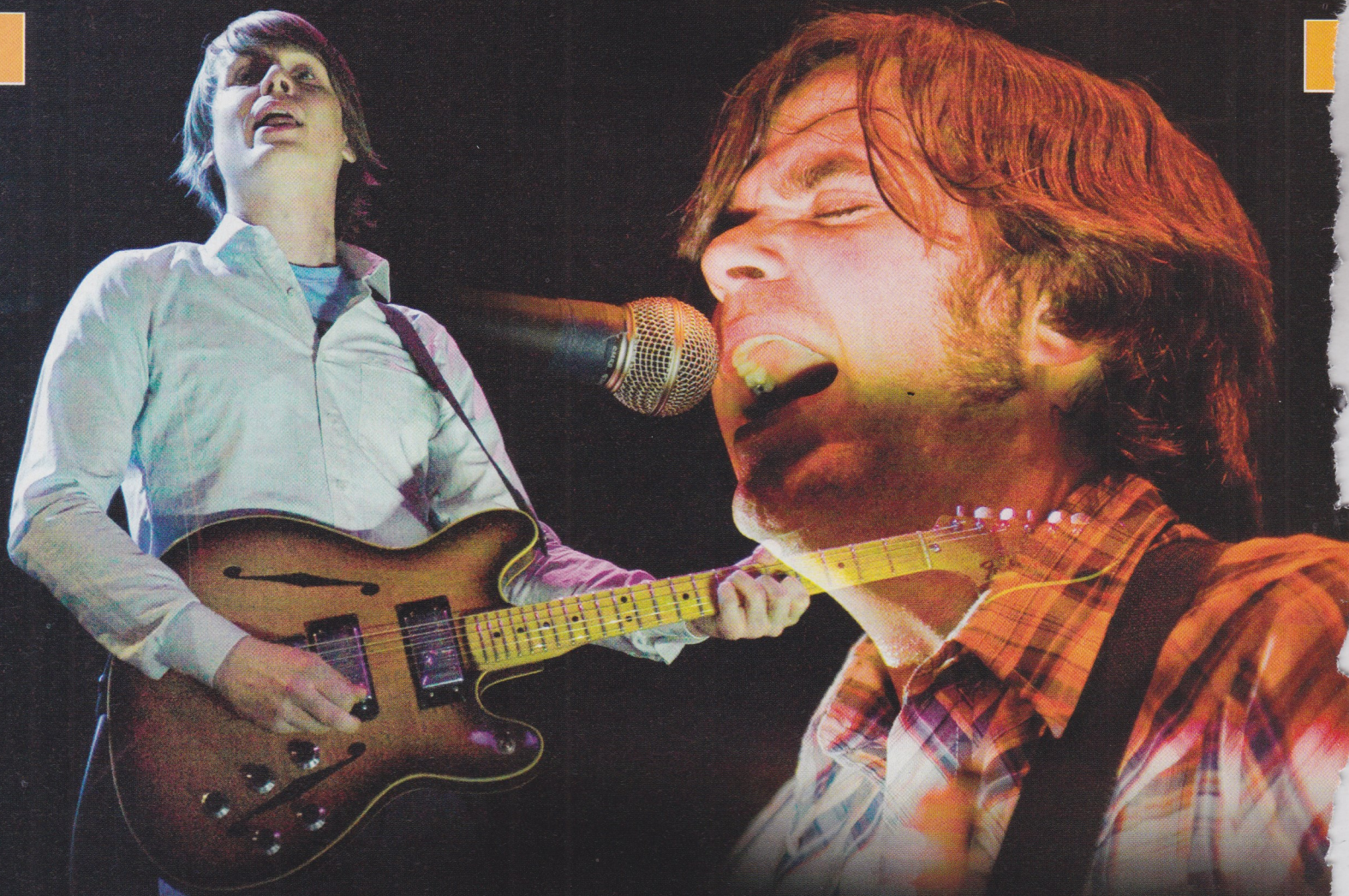
We've started playing about seven of them live right now, just to get a feel for them and to see how people are reacting even before hearing the record. Once the album comes out we'll be playing more. It's got to be the right time and place and it's got to fit into the set. It's also difficult when you've got a catalogue of

six records now to choose from. What we need to do is take a fan poll and have our fan community help build our set list.

Have you thought about putting out a full live album?

We have one kind of, the "John Bird EP" from 2007 and we have the "Drive Well, Sleep Carefully" DVD, but hopefully... We're geared up to be recording all of our





live shows and it could be that something winds up being put together at a later date. I don't think anything will come our immediately because we've got to let the record sit for a while. Also the rest of the world is doing this for us when you get on YouTube. You can compile your own little live album.

You joined the band in 2003?

October of 2002, but the first shows we did were in 2003.

Was it odd at all to join a band that had been together for a while or had you already known the guys?

I had known the guys. I played in a band with Nick (Harmer) for three years before Death Cab had started and that band never really went on to do anything, but we had time together; we had been in some trenches and sweated it out in the practice space and spent a lot of time together as a rhythm section already. I had known Ben and Chris for years just from being in Bellingham (WA) when all those guys came there for school. We hung out and we were contemporaries going to each other's shows and poster for each other's shows. In between drummers they had asked me before at different times to play in the band. The timing was just never right until just before "Transatlanticism."

Nick and I wound up filling in for a bass player and a drummer for this band Juno and one night after practice we were talking and we said, "Why don't we just play together?" We had this musical crush on each other for years and we admire what each other does and I thought they were a really great band, so I said "We should just work together on the next record." He went back and talked to the band and long story short we got together and when we started to play it was "Oh, this is what good chemistry feels like." The rest is history.

I know you've played drums for a number of different bands like Tegan & Sarah and others in the past. Is there anyone else you've been playing with lately?

This guy named Matt Nathanson. I did half a record for him last year. There's a deep catalogue of things, but most of those are either out of print or hard to find. Tegan & Sarah was the biggest commercial release I was a part of.

Do you enjoy the chance to be able to play songs outside of your main band?


Definitely. Literally you get to wear a different suit to work. As a drummer in a band, I'm not out there as a drummer for hire. I'm not a chameleon who gets hired

to do this stuff all the time. It's more that someone is really into the way that I play or the sound that I get, so when they ask me to be involved in their record they are genuinely excited just to hear what I have to offer, which gives me a lot of liberties to throw in a whole bunch of stuff out there that I typically wouldn't do. That's really the fun part.

So will you be playing on the next Slayer album?

(Laughs). I'd be all for it. I've got some double bass chops. That would be a dream come true to be some incognito drummer that plays on all these different records that you would never ever guess.

The video for "I Will Posses Your Heart" seems like a major undertaking, filmed all over the globe. Are videos important to you as a band?

(Laughs). Everything is important to us. Everyone in the band has a vested interest in everything that is creative, from the artwork to the lyrical font in the artwork and everything else... All of my band mates just get really into things like this. Because we all have these super nerdy passions for all these creative endeavors, we all have a lot of friends that share these same passions, like Aaron (Stuart-Ahn, who directed the video). 



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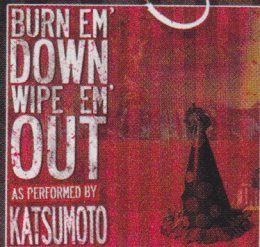
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THE T4 PROJECT

SHANNON SAINT RYAN VACCINATES THE MIND AGAINST VIRULENT CONFORMITY

By Christian Cipollini / Photography By Selena Salfen

Even the most hardcore punk music connoisseurs may be at a loss if asked who Shannon Saint Ryan is. But according to the punk rock conceptualist... that's okay because it's not really about him. He rather prefers people become inspired on many levels simply by examining the project he masterminded. So then, what's the "project" and who the hell is Shannon Saint Ryan anyway? First things first, the T4 Project is a grand foray into a world of political and social discourse through multiple, unified mediums— music, words and art.

The story involves a virus; call it a metaphor for humanity's woes. It's a concept album; perhaps in the purest form such a description can be justified. It's complete with a lyrical story, accompanying illustrated booklet, and though every song can stand on its own — there is a solid theme throughout. Shannon Saint Ryan is the man behind it all. What makes the project and Saint Ryan's work all the more noteworthy (though he's entirely too humble to take that much credit) — is his diligent work behind the scenes — bringing together an incredible group of like-minded, iconic musicians from across the alternative and punk landscape. Recruiting members from a slew of bands, such as The Buzzcocks, Porno for Pyros, Circle Jerks, Subhumans, and many more, it literally took years to create the T4 Project, and now that it's ready for the world to absorb visually and audibly. Shannon Saint Ryan explains the how and why.

What is the T4 Project?

It's a story from start to finish, including the

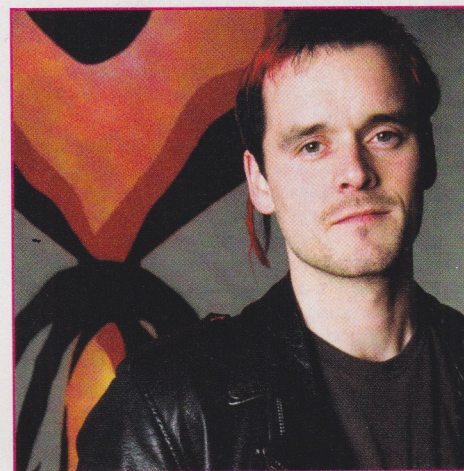
artwork, so as you turn the pages you see new chapters. Each song will have a different feel, and each musician will put their own stamp on it, but it's not like a compilation where all the tracks are completely different. They all sound like they're in the same place, but with different flavor per song depending on musician. It was done a little like musical chairs.

This is essentially a concept album with a cross-section of contributing artists on board, but did it start with the idea of something called T4?

It didn't come first, but the T4 virus is something that I've been running with for years. I've used it on all my other music projects. I wanted to tell that story, and the best way to do that was by calling it the T4 Project.

You've got the virus, the iconic artists, an important story to tell, but who is Shannon Saint Ryan to be doing all of this anyway?

(Laughs). Yeah, I was fourteen in a biology class learning how a virus worked. And



I'm a kid thinking this is a metaphor for the "system". The virus injects a cell with DNA and like little babies the virus bursts out and takes over other cells. It's the same thing over and over, so to me as a kid it was like the virus, the system, was trying to inject ideas into a kid — be this way, be that way — to mold and conform the kid — backed by authority. So by the time you get older, you've conformed. You become blinded and end up doing the same thing to your kids.

So you grow up with the virus in your head since your youth. What next?

I started with a little four-track, and over time began recording local bands, and then someone else would hear about it. Over the course of four years recording from East Coast to West Coast, Canada to Israel, all these different people and punk bands and some on bigger labels, everyone saw how we were all part of the same thing. Everyone was going against the grain. They just enjoyed putting out records and doing whatever they wanted to talk about. The people involved all



had sort of the same heart. I wanted to bring all of the people together to... celebrate it. It really moved me as a kid.

You are more than the brains behind the T4, you also contribute musically and vocally. Did this help in recruiting the vast roster of talent involved?

Yeah, I mean you've got to do your homework. But at the same time, and in talking to the musicians, well I had already put down demos and this was a blueprint so I could show the musicians the idea, and if they were into it or not. I told them not to play it like you hear it, because I wanted them to put their own stamp on it. I'm not really a musician; I feel more comfortable on the writing side. If you asked me to do a lead guitar part... I'd shit my pants! (laughs) It's amazing what you can do with it, taking it to a new level. It's an environment where you are encouraging people to be a part of it. It was really good. For example, with the two drummers, Spike and Trotsky, I asked them to pick the songs they gravitate towards. Whichever ones they were comfortable with. They each picked the songs they wanted, and each take half a set, and I would say to the bassists, 'take half of that set and half of the other' and then talk to the guitar players and say the same. It's a way people could play three or four songs, and end up playing with everyone. So each song has a different flavor, but each part of the same thing.

Was the enlisting process a difficult task?

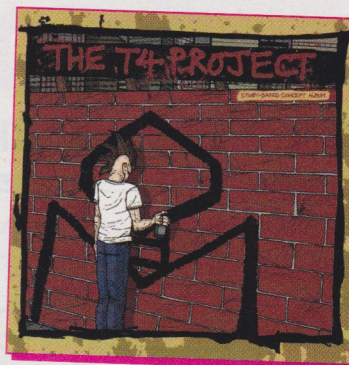
I didn't have a clue where they were and they had never heard of me. It was insane, but everyone has been absolutely terrific. I think

it's about the approach. So, how would I get a hold of Trotsky from the Subhumans, or Joe from Bad Religion? Say if you knew one of those guys, I'd approach you and talk about the concept and show you the blueprint for it. I'd give the demo and say 'check it out. If it's shitty - that's okay, just give it back to me and if you see it, and feel confident in asking them to give it a listen - great. But I always said there was no pressure. If someone didn't believe in it, don't stick your neck out for me. If you believe in it, you will gravitate towards it.

Do you feel everyone involved was satisfied with the final outcome?

I think it came out great. We've all been very happy with it. You have to be original, but not so rigid that you're going to snap. Shit happens along the way, and obstacles. If you've got heart and the vision - you won't stop - but you've got to be flexible. The hardest part is the waiting. It kills you. It's great to have the artists listen to the tape, and you shake hands, and then weeks go by... its like waiting for exam results at school. So those were difficult times in between. Again to ask, 'why are you doing this?', but if your heart in the right place, then you'll get it done.


So, is Shannon Saint Ryan redefining or reminding us of what punk is supposed



to be?

I don't even like calling myself punk, or this is a punk record really. It's whatever people interpret it. I think that should be encouraged. Sometimes, I think punk evolved into just someone doing something different. A punk band could be political, or a band that just wants to go out, have fun, and dress in drag and get freaky. Is that my cup of tea? Not particularly, but who cares.

The T4 Project certainly fits the "punk rock" mold if you will, but how would you characterize it or hope people take from it?

There are two things, on two different levels. One is for the theme, catch the virus and watch out for the virus. Personally for me, it's about choices. It's about thinking before you act. Taking a step back and looking, because a whole day can spiral out of control. And the work behind it. I didn't come from money. I was working full time in music. So, I'm hoping some kid will get this and be like, 'hey, if this guy can do it, I can do it!' I hope they get inspired and do their own thing and know they don't have to feel worn out by a fourteen-hour day job. There's a way to make it work, and I hope that comes across. I get excited to see what others will come up with. It's about art and being creative. As with punk, some people love it and some hate it, but I wasn't out to get everyone to love. I was just doing what I felt was right. 

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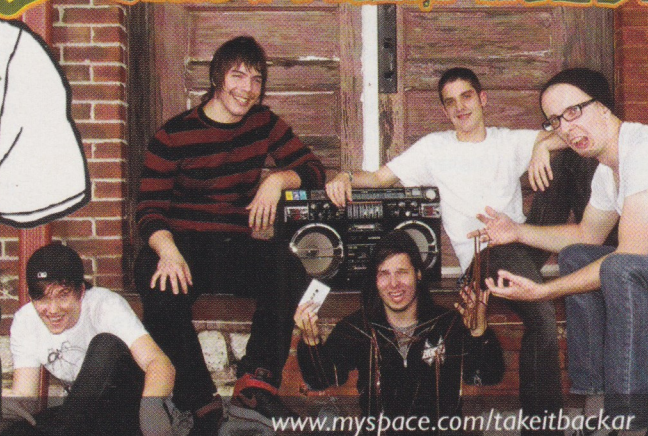
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PUNK HISTORY: MIGRANT IN AMERICA

By Lisa Root

In my last column on Labor Unions I focused on the effects of the Industrial Revolution on working conditions and noted that sunup to sundown hours spent in the fields was transferred to the factory workplace. On the flipside of this coin, while processes were being mechanized and automated in factories, food still needed to be on the table. So at this same time agriculture also became a business enterprise that relied on a workforce of poor, children and minorities- aka, with conditions just as shitty, but with sunburn.

Slave labor was eliminated after the Civil War, but sharecropping became a way of keeping the status quo. Sharecroppers and migrant workers were the slaves of the Jim Crow era and their songs became the Blues as we know it, later to become rock n roll and punk rock. Some of the earliest pioneers like Ma Rainey to Elmore James to Johnny Cash were born into the sharecropping life. The sharecroppers and migrant farmers'

travels from the South to the North in search of something a little better in life manifested itself in song, much more than organizing, like the birth of unions in the factory workplace.

As quoted by one Southern farmer, "We used to own our slaves; now we just rent them", in Edward R. Murrow's documentary *Harvest of Shame*. It centered on the conditions of workers in Palm Beach County, FL, near where this little lesson will end up,



and exposed the conditions to people in 1960, when there just wasn't much attention being brought to the issue. Times were good, TV was just hitting its stride in being the image maker for how life was supposed to look, and at that time most people believed that TV was the truth and they just had to get there. Even today I think we're just now waking up with a hangover of the last 8 years after the partttay that was the Clinton years- times were just easier and we're now realizing that hard times are coming our way.

Migrant workers hit a big peak during the Great Depression when jobs and farms were lost and people were forced out on the road (including my grandma when she was a young girl) in search of any kind of work they could get. It was well documented with books like *The Grapes of Wrath*, and also, like my last column, there was a journalist that documented the plight of these people. Dorothea Lange, like Lewis W. Hine before her, documented the plight of migrant workers during the Depression through photographs and her journalism. Her photo of a mother with her children is THE face of the Depression, and looking into the woman's disparate eyes and knowing

she is just a year or two older than I am is haunting.

After the depression, World War II diverted a lot of attention from farm workers and the post war boom of building, manufacturing, etc put it out of public attention.

Attention was re drawn to the cause in the 60's and 70's through the tireless work of Caesar Chavez at organizing and unionizing. He brought the union techniques, as well as the peaceful protest style of the Civil rights movement and made a lot of progress, but alas, today due to the inability to keep that momentum going, the same old story of the winding up back at the drawing board is where their plight stands. The United Farm Workers Union though still fights the good fight and has done a lot for exposing the wrongs and pushing for the necessary rights of migrant workers.

The life of a migrant worker is one that rings of many of the conditions of the industrial age of the 1800's. Loopholes in the system allow young workers under the age of 18 to work long days- over 8 hours without overtime pay, which flies completely against the grain of any other industry in the US today, and without many of the basic needs any other worker would naturally get. Currently farm work is exempt from overtime



one of my very favorite labels in the world, are working with Harvest Of Hope (see sidebar). I took some time to talk with Ryan about this and their efforts to help the cause.

An interview with Ryan of No Idea and Phil Kellerman, President of Harvest of Hope.

How did you guys become involved with Harvest of Hope?

Ryan: Over the last couple years I've been working on getting my Masters in bilingual education and had been specializing in migrant education. Through this I met a lot of amazing people who were working with migrant workers.

One of the most inspiring people I met was Phil and all the work he does with Harvest of Hope... it's really amazing. He actually ended up being a mutual friend of my family in upstate New York too. Ever since I met him a few years ago, I've been doing all that I can to help him and the foundation out, whether that be setting up benefit shows, volunteering with various programs or just getting the word out there. And of course it really helps that he is based out of Gainesville.

The punk rock & underground community has a long tradition of supporting and spearheading grassroot organizations (social, political, etc.)... have you and the foundation found a strong connection and support within this community, and if so, how?

Phil: The Harvest of Hope Foundation has been very fortunate to have made a connection with Ryan and No Idea Records in Gainesville and in particular, Against Me! Harvest of Hope provides "direct services" in the form of emergency

requirements by the Federal Government and during peak season hours can be up to 14-18 days- seven days a week. This segment of workers are cast into a cycle- moving and traveling, their kids aren't getting the education they need and are thrown into working as well to get by. Basing their lives around the growing seasons, kids work in the fields, miss school, have lower educations (on average a 6th grade level.), are exposed to harmful pesticides, separated from family, and work in dangerous and harsh conditions. Farm work is the most unregulated industry in the country today, and with the large majority of those in the fields being undocumented workers, these people are grossly mistreated.

It took a great deal of a fight to get kids out of the factories in this country, but the battle is only now getting fought in the fields. More of the rhetoric goes to immigration issues than education and opportunities for kids and families working for horribly low wages, doing exhausting physical labor. If any one industry needs its Chavez back it's the migrant workers of this country. The United Farm Worker's Union estimates that over 800,000 children work on farms in the U.S. today.

The statistics from Human Rights Watch are like reading about child labor in the 1800's- Frankly eye-opening disgusting... Workers are regularly exposed to harmful pesticides, not given hand washing facilities or bathrooms, often not given the required amount of drinking water- instead sold beer or soda at jacked up rates, not given the proper first aid when needed... it goes on and on and so could I.

Here's some statistics from the Child Labor Coalition:

- Eighteen states have no minimum age requirement for children working in agriculture.
- In Oregon, the minimum age is nine; in Illinois it is ten.
- Fourteen states require a minimum age of twelve; in nine states the minimum age is fourteen.
- Only one state, Nevada, has set sixteen as the minimum age for hired farm workers.

Of all the progress in child labor, agriculture remains the one huge loophole in the whole thing, and we as a country stand for better. Some people in our punk world are doing what they can to help. Tony and Ryan from No Idea Records out of Gainesville, FL,

HARVEST OF HOPE

Mission

The Harvest of Hope Foundation, a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization based in Gainesville, Florida provides emergency and educational financial aid to migrant farm-workers and families across the country. Federal, state and local assistance to mobile harvesters of fruits, vegetables and other foods is limited and often not available at all. Thus it is the mission of Harvest of Hope to fill in the gaps in service to this most hard-working yet needy group of workers and families by providing financial help for gas, tires, car repairs, housing, utilities, medical services, food, clothing, funeral expenses, and scholarships to children of migrant farm workers attending college.

Background

Thanks to an inheritance from Dr. Helen Zand, his grandmother, Philip Kellerman established the Harvest of Hope Foundation in 1997 as the only national foundation to exclusively assist migrant farm workers and families with direct "grassroots" financial aid. As of May 12, 2008, Harvest of Hope has distributed more than \$638,000 in emergency and educational financial assistance. Harvest of Hope is often the last resort for help for migrant farm workers and families when all other resources are exhausted or not available at all. The foundation has firm and established procedures for establishing the legitimacy of each request for funds, and coordinates with a network of migrant farm worker advocates, social workers and teachers to provide assistance. Harvest of Hope is a humanitarian and helping organization and thus assists migrant workers regardless of their legal status.

Expenses and Distributions

The Harvest of Hope Foundation is proud that eighty (80) cents of every dollar donated goes to provide direct financial aid to migrant workers and their families. Twelve (12) percent of all donations are used for administrative expenses and a relatively small eight (8) percent compensates the president for running the foundation. These figures reflect well on the foundation as compared to other non-profit organizations.

and educational financial to migrant farmworkers and families across the country. Most corporate and other foundations have expressed policies against funding "direct service" providers, and thus Harvest of Hope has been hampered in its ability to secure financial grants. In response, the five benefits Against Me! has performed raised \$18,000 for Harvest of Hope, and future progressive music benefits will raise more needed funds. The connection between the punkrock and underground community will continue to grow as more progressives learn of the unique and grassroots work of Harvest of Hope.

AGAINST ME! has done lot of benefits for the organization. Has that been beneficial in raising awareness to this organization?

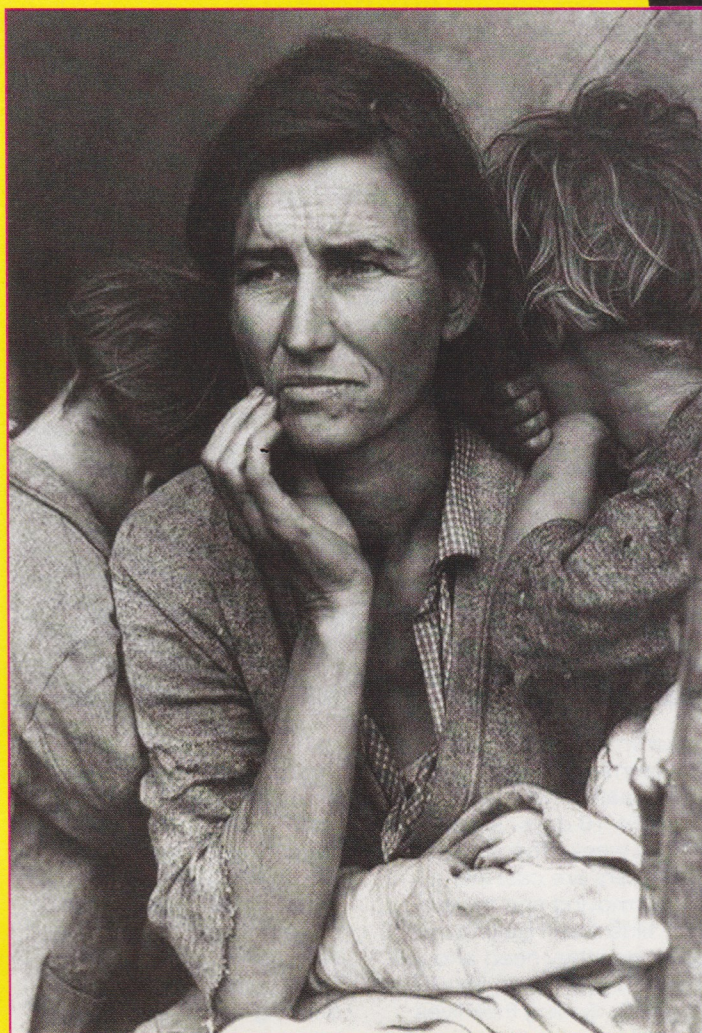
Phil: Most definitely. At the five Against Me! Benefits we heard not one negative comment generated towards migrant farmworkers. As president of the foundation, I had the opportunity to speak to many of the concert-goers and those who knew little of the struggles of migrant workers gained some awareness. Against Me! has allowed my brother, Ed Kellerman, Communications Director of Harvest of Hope, and myself to speak for several minutes to the audience about our work and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. At the Thanksgiving evening concert in Chicago, audience members were throwing dollar bills on stage as donations. The concert in Athens, Georgia resulted in a two-hour radio interview on the University of Alabama radio station. Since Harvest of Hope is a small family-run foundation, Against Me! has helped to put Harvest of Hope on the "map" as we say. Ryan: Yeah, it's really amazing how generous the Against Me! guys have been. I initially went to them with the idea of a single benefit show for the foundation,

and they really connected to the cause and continue to be extremely supportive. I think what really impressed those guys about the foundation was the way that Phil ran it as well. I remember Tom and Andrew both commenting on how awesome it was to be able to see exactly where the funds that are being raised are going to...Phil does a great job of laying out where every penny raised for the foundation goes to. This can also really help you realize what difference you are actually making in these peoples lives.

What are some things we as consumers can do to support rights for the farm workers bringing food to our table?

Phil: Here are three suggestions. Consumers can advocate that large buyers of fruits and vegetables such as McDonalds, Taco Bell and Burger King pay a better wage to those who harvest and produce the food they purchase and sell. Consumers can tell Congress to pass legislation reform to allow hard-working immigrants the ability to adjust their status to legal, thus eliminating the discrimination and abuse that many undocumented farm workers suffer. Last, Harvest of Hope provides needed direct financial aid to migrant farmworkers, and we welcome financial donations, benefit concerts, and donations of antiques, collectibles, memorabilia, automobiles, stock and other investments to help more needy yet hard-working migrant farmworkers and families.

Ryan: Right now, as Phil said, going after the larger corporate companies to simply pay pennies more for the food they are bringing in can make huge changes in the lives of the people harvesting this food. Also, since the migrant farmworker population is seemingly "invisible" to many U.S. citizens, being an advocate for much needed social, educational and medical services really helps. There should be volunteer



opportunities in your area to work with programs that deal with English education, health issues and legal rights for Migrant workers.


What are some of the things you guys are spearheading this year?

Phil: In addition to the tremendous work that Ryan and Tony at No Idea Records will be doing to benefit Harvest of Hope, the Foundation will be finishing up a revision and renewal of its web-site at www.harvestofhope.net. On the web-site there will be a store where people can purchase fair trade/organic coffee and other items to support the work of the Foundation.

Ryan: We will continue to have ongoing local and state-wide benefit shows to support the foundation for sure. We have been extremely lucky to not only have the support of Against Me!, but as well as Fake Problems, Gaslight Anthem, Sage Francis,



the World/Inferno Friendship Society, Young Livers, Cobra Skulls and many, many more. Everyone has been amazingly supportive and it really helps get awareness of the foundation out there. Hopefully, this upcoming spring (2009) Tony, who also organizes the Fest every year here in Gainesville, and I will be coordinating a HUGE benefit concert in St. Augustine, Florida. It will be three days long, involve tons of bands, artists, food, camping and be a really great time. That's what we are working on really hard right now. We have a lot of support pouring in from all over and if all goes well, it will turn out really great and raise a lot of much needed money for Harvest of Hope.

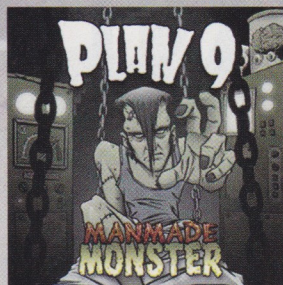
Bands, organizations, etc. that would like to help out with benefits, please get in touch with Ryan Murphy at: harvestofhope@gmail.com



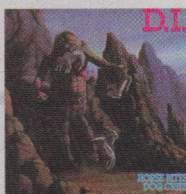
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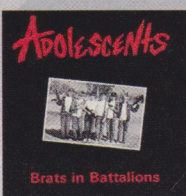
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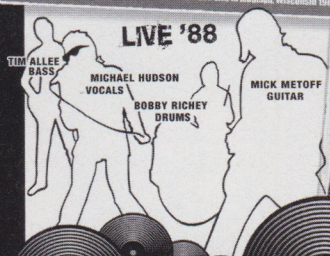
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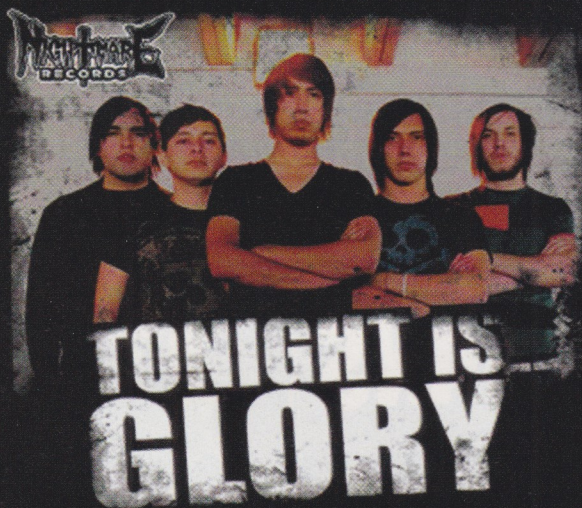
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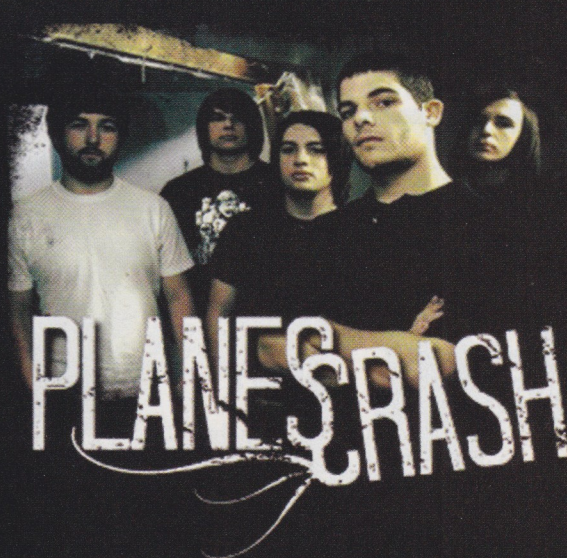
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A SKYLIT DRIVE

INTERVIEW WITH JAG (VOCALS) AND KYLE SIMMONS (KEYBOARDS)

By Crystal Lowe / Photos Courtesy Of Tragic Hero

So where is the band originally from?
The wonderful Lodi, California.

How did you guys get things started musically?

Most of us went to the same high school and started jamming and were in some previous bands together. We got Cory about 9 months into starting the band and then we got Jag in January.

Your new album "Wires and the Concept of Breathing" was just released. How would you describe it's sound of it to someone who hasn't heard it?
Close your eyes... imagine the most epic battle your mind can conjure up. Think of the feeling, the sites, the smells and the sounds. Maybe that might do it! (laughter)

How are things working out with new front man Michael Jagmin?

Things are going great! We're all stoked with the direction he's allowed us to reach.

How did you guys get set up with him and how does he differ from your previous singer?

When Jordan was no longer a part of the band Jag wrote us on the net. We exchanged information and before we

knew it he was here in Lodi to audition. Once we started jamming it felt right to everyone, and poof! He became our singer. As for how he differs it's best said that his particular sound is what we wanted and needed. It was kind of like finding the missing puzzle piece.

You're on one of the summers biggest tours with Sky Eats Airplane, Emarosa, and Breathe Carolina. You have to be pretty stoked on that?

We are so excited for that tour! All of the guys in those bands are already our buddies, so we know it's going to be a blast.

Any crazy and/or interesting stories from tours of the past?

Well, a lot of them are sadly a little too explicit for a magazine to be printing, but I'm sure this one will do. On our recent stop in Allentown, Pennsylvania our van was broken into right outside of the venue. We had left our van unattended but locked for no more than five minutes. When our tech Tim went back to the van to move it to its final parking spot he found it with a side window completely smashed out. After looking over the car inside and out multiple times we found out that we had lost: 2 laptops, 4 mp3 players, a PSP + the games, and a back-pack. Luckily the show that night was awesome, so we left PA with a little higher hopes than when we got there.

What is it like to work with some of the industries top booking and management people Dave Shapiro and Eric Rushing?

This might sound cheesy, but it's like a dream come true. We never imagined we'd be where we are right now. Hearing about bands getting to work with Dave Shapiro used to make us so jealous. Now I'm not even sure if we're use to it yet, ha! It's amazing to sum things up.

What about recording with Jaime King?

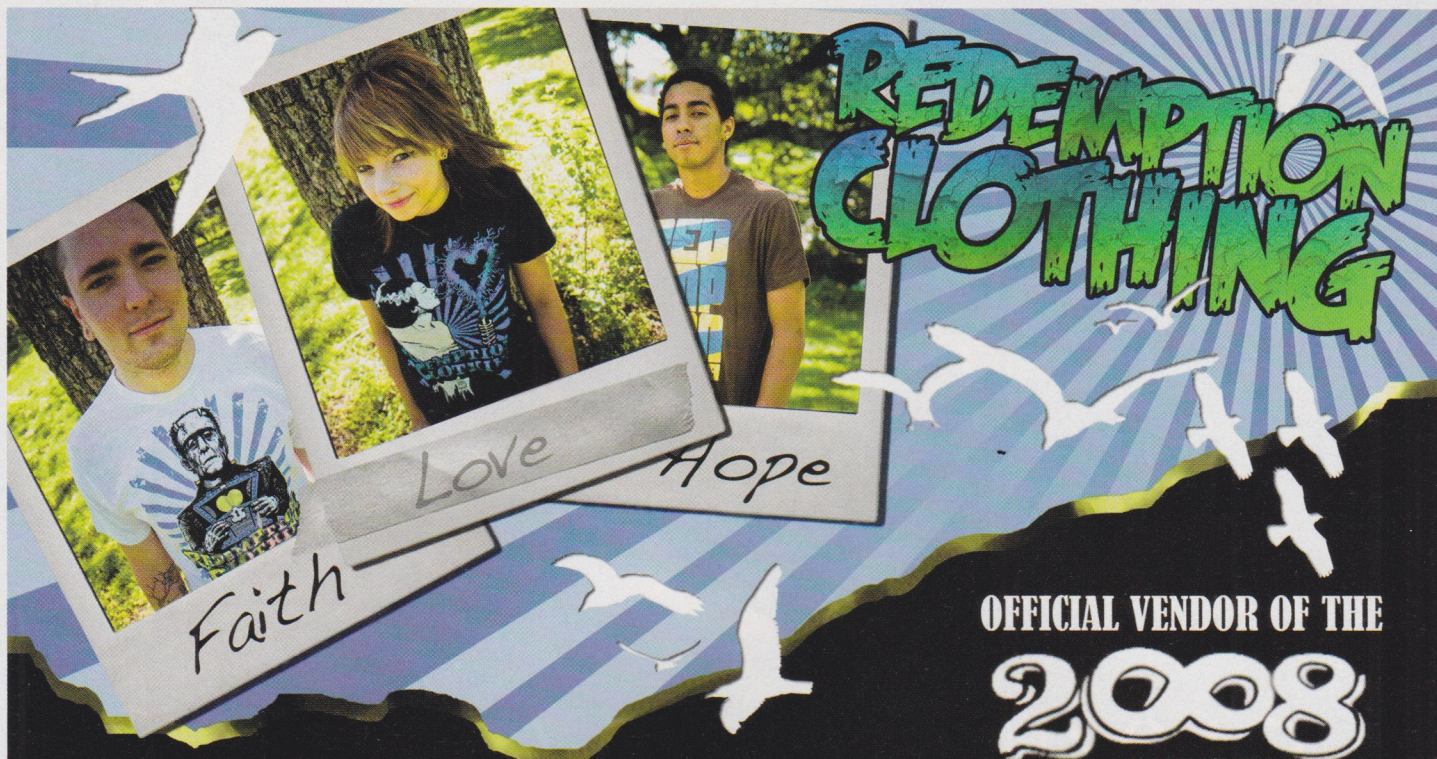
He was a great guy, and fun to work with. He made the recording process run very smoothly.

How do you feel about fashion being such a vital part of your genre of music? Do you even fell it is a vital part?

We all like similar fashion styles, but we don't really see it as a vital part of our music. If someone has an issue with a certain look we definitely don't think it should affect the way our music is judged. We're all for letting the music speak for itself.

Anything else you would like to say or any messages to your fans?

Thank you all so much for your endless support. We can't wait to see all of you on one of our upcoming tours!!



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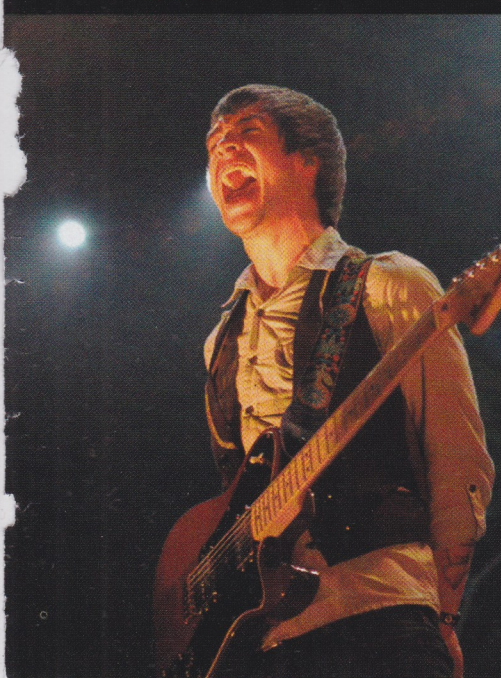
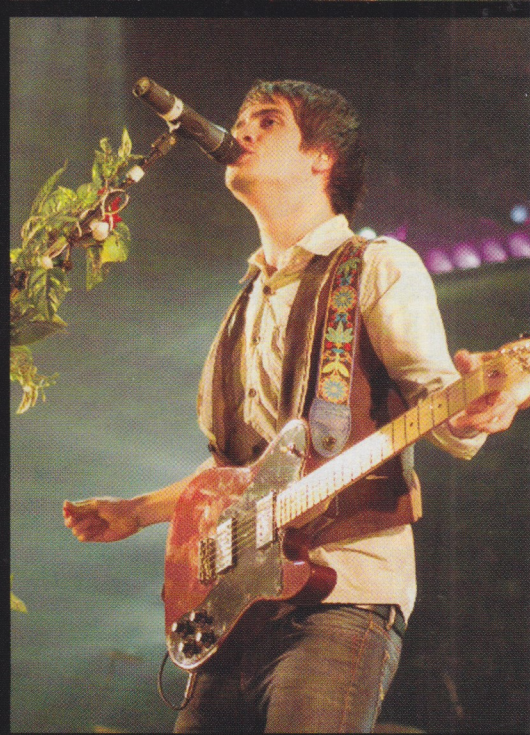
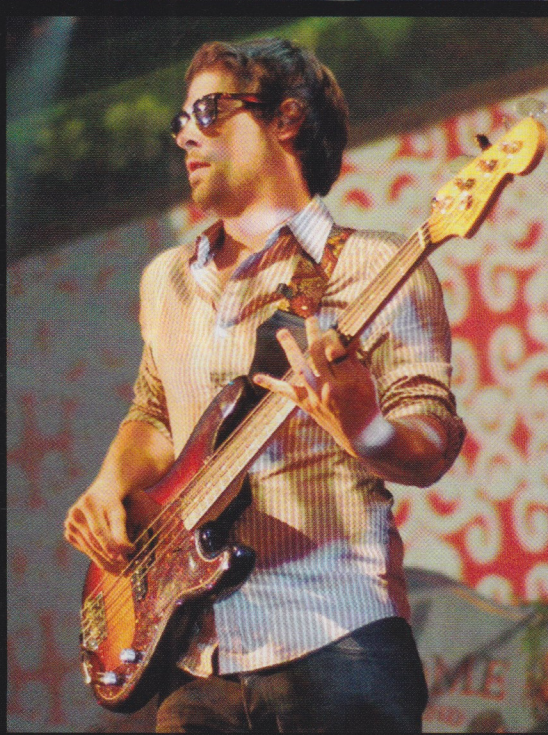
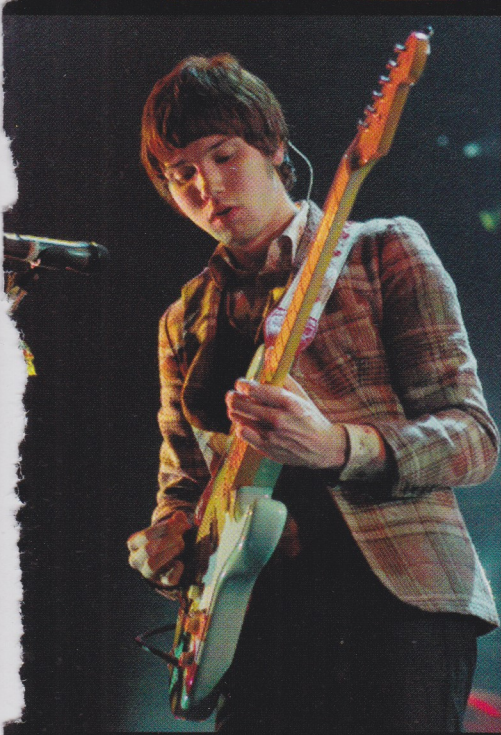
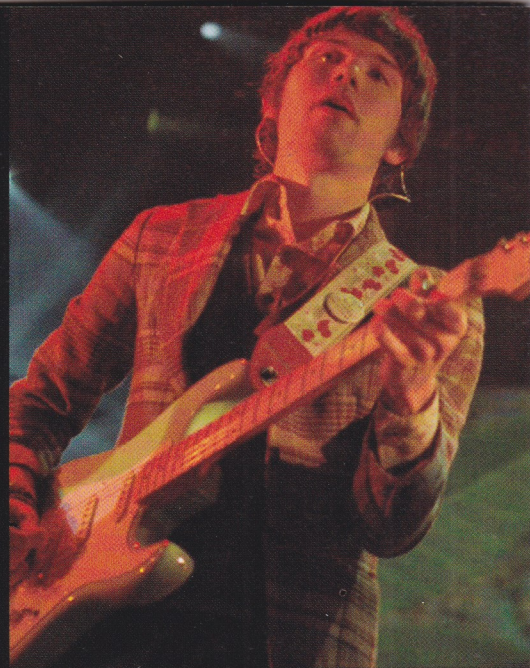
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Photography By Todd Fixler

AMP 99



LONGWAY

TOUR DIARY: FROM LA TO AK...

It's just before 10pm local time and in between drags during a much needed cigarette break, we watch as the line continues forming outside of the club. It's swollen with anticipation. It's cold outside... but something else seems strange. The sun is still out. We aren't in Southern California, we aren't home, but everyone we meet makes us feel like we are.

Outside the typical tour route, we found ourselves far north in Anchorage, Alaska. Invited to co-headline the finals of Ernie Ball Battle for Warped Tour, the idea of playing with Agent Orange seemed killer enough...but the kicker was the something-hour plane ride to Alaska to get to where we would play. Although we are in Alaska something seems comfortably strange. Besides the fact that it feels like 3pm when it is nearing midnight, besides the fact that not a single one of us would have ever imagined taking our tools up to Alaska to perform, the real anomaly is in the excitement that's obviously weighted in all our stomachs. Suddenly we are 18 again and all of our friends are in the crowd. This isn't just the standard Saturday night at the rock show; the faces in the crowd seem much easier to see. The month of preparation, the promotion, the radio interviews, the boarding passes, the phone calls, the rushing, and the scrambling have all culminated in these fleeting seconds of sanity with a cigarette. The hands on the clock tell us its time to get inside...to the stage, take a deep breath, listen to the crowd, wait for the cue... Longway is in fucking Anchorage, Alaska.

Wednesday, May 14, 2008 - Los Angeles to Anchorage, Alaska

Merch, Myspace, and munchies start the day off. We agreed to do an acoustic set for Anchorage's rock radio station 94.7 The End. Dabbling in procrastination, Brian and I waited til the last minute to work this out. I mean two ours before our flight we were in the studio lockout trying to pick what songs we were gonna play and how to change them so they sound right for the acoustic sound. Fucking awesome. The airport bar was a bit more crowded than usual, as founder of the Warped Tour Kevin Lyman actually made his way over to us to say hello. Unreal. We felt like the precedent for the tour was set almost that second. We arrive in Alaska at about 1 am and it is still dusk outside! What the fuck! Amanda and Drea from Alcatraz Records come and pick us up and take us to where we are staying. Alaskans do it right. We aren't in any hotel, Alcatraz set us up in a fucking penthouse. After getting settled reality sets in...we are in a penthouse in the middle of Alaska. Rad! Full kitchen, Washer and Dryer, 2 bathrooms, 3 bedrooms plus a

huge family room with two balconies! The view is amazing! The exact opposite of the horror stories from life in a touring band. Soon after we discover that the bars in Alaska don't close until 3am. When the worst thing that happens is getting lost with Icepick (bassist Travis) looking for the park & fly at the airport, we must be doing something right.

Thursday, May 15, 2008 - Anchorage, Seward Alaska

Fucking freezing ass cold but insane. We got up around 7 in the morning which is never a good time for us. Hit the gas station to grab the necessities; Coffee, Energy Drinks, Cigarettes and assorted junk food to fill up the empty early morning stomach. Wait in the parking lot for a bit for everyone to show up and start the trip out to Seward where we had a boat waiting for us to take us fishing. We hop in the car with Ryan from 907 Autosports and Sara from AFC (a few of the weekends sponsors), and hit the road. I think the car went under a hundred once and that was because we stopped in the pass to take some pictures in the snow!!! Chucks, Jeans and a sweatshirt is not the premium attire for Alaska but we made it work. Arrive at Seward after shopping for food and beer. It is windy and rainy but still fucking amazing. We get out and start fishing Sarah Baer from Warped and Greg from Hurley are in a race to bring the first. Sarah won. Brian caught a ling cod which was fucking huge with gnarly teeth. I think everyone but Mikey caught a fish. A couple people puked over the side. We are still trying to figure out if it was sea sickness or from the booze. Some bald eagles were swooping in and taking fish that we threw back out of the water. It was flat out amazing. Not one of us thought that we would be playing music in Alaska and getting to fish and see the things that we were seeing.

We headed back to the penthouse to change. It is still fucking light at 10 pm and it is throwing every thing off. You have to tell time by when you are hungry not how it looks outside. Amanda



and Drea came and got us and we went for dinner. It is Brian's birthday today so we proceed to The Great Alaskan Bush Company. Yea, it is exactly what you think it is... Off to the strip club. Our drivers start talking about having a couple of bongos in the car and no sooner do the words come out of their mouth do we see the lights in our rear view. Fucking great. Having a bench warrant for an unpaid ticket the first thought is...I get to Alaska to play music and now I am going to jail in Alaska. Fuck. The cop comes to the window and asks for the usual shit. That usual shit is in the glovebox, along with a bong. Thank god he wasn't a fucking moron and open it. (I have been with friends that have) Luckily he is able to get his shit out of the glove box while the cop was checking his info and he let us go! Despite the heart attack, we got our fill of titties for the night. Actually Mikey fell asleep in the club. It is the first time I have ever seen a man fall asleep sober in a strip club.

Friday, May 16th, 2008 - 94.7 radio interview in Anchorage, then on to Wasilla, Alaska

Up early again. We are doing a radio interview and acoustic set for the rock radio station 94.7 The End. The DJ Johnny is a cool guy. He let us go to town with all the Shit, Fucks, and Damn Cock Balls we wanted. Thank god for the bleep. We get in there and I take off my clothes and sit behind the dj's desk and start screwing with Johnny. It was all in good fun. The interview was a good time I love doing that sort of shit. We jammed out "Love Lost" which is a new song that will be on the new album and "Chances to Begin" which is off the unreleased Rock N Roll County album. Beer starts to flow. We wrap the songs and the interview and head outside for some pictures. We snap some pictures with the people from the station then they want us to take a couple of pictures with station's promo truck. I look down and see that I am standing right next to the gas tank! What the hell am I supposed to do but open it drop my pants and pretend that I am pissing in it? C'mon.

Went back and loaded up and off to Wasilla which is about 40 minutes away. We have two hotel rooms out there, an unlimited bar tab, and nothing but time!!!! The show goes pretty well despite some technical difficulties. Mikey's foot pedal came apart during the set and Greg from Hurley had to dive on stage to try and help put it back together. I thought I broke a string turns out I just pulled it out and wrapped it around two other strings...Wasn't firing on all cylinders but still a good show. Oh yeah, did I mention that I fell off the fucking stage. Damn being blind in one eye!!! I was telling Vin from Pilot Touhill to come up and sing Rebel Yell with us which we close the set with and I stepped right off the stage and into his lap. Funny shit! After the show it's the after party. Hung out with Dave from Bleed the Dream for a bit. He is a fucking cool guy. Ran into a girl that I had been talking to so me and one of her friends hit my hotel room around 3 while the rest of the boys stayed out partying until about 530. When

the girls left Travis came in. We always room together being the only two single guys in the band. The room was a blur, as I'm sure was the case for the rest of the guys. Only I was sober.

Saturday, May 17th, 2008 - Wasilla to Anchorage show at the Paddle Boat and Chillkoot Charlies

What a fucking train wreck. It wasn't a pretty sight in the morning. There was marker tattoos. Everyone still looked drunk and we had to be out of the hotel by 1030. Got all the gear loaded and headed back towards Anchorage. On the way back we noticed two people walking on the side of the road. Yep Kevin Lyman and Sarah Baer from Warped Tour got up early after partying all night. Hitchhiked in to town for the farmers market and were walking back. We offer them a ride but we are running late to pick up Agent Orange at the airport. In true chill fashion they say not a problem and hitchhike back. So those of you who think you are entitled to anything because you are a "rockstar" take fucking note! The man and woman who run Warped Tour, Taste of Chaos, Metal Mayhem, Side One Dummy etc, just hitch hike when they don't have a ride. Fucking awesome!

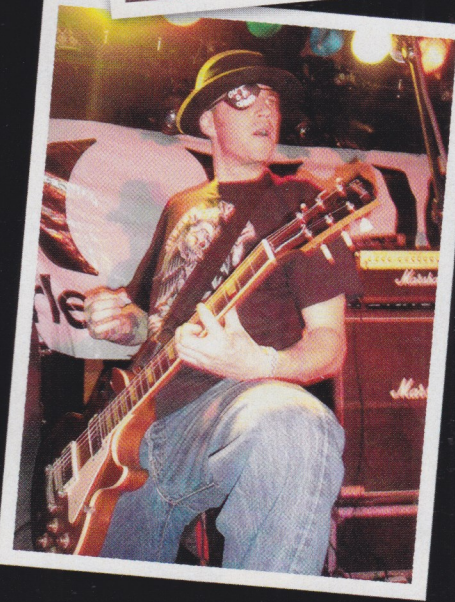
Amanda who is our tour manager/ strip club locator for the trip gets there and carts us off to the Paddleboat for our first show of the night. We are pulling a double tonight with two shows. We arrive at one of the most beautiful back drops I have ever seen... and you can here crickets. Apparently when you get an amazing sunny day in Alaska that lasts until 11 pm you fucking use it. There was no one at the show. Back to Chillkoot Charlie's for the evening's main event.

We were headlining the Ernie Ball Battle for Warped Contest along with Agent Orange. We got up there were firing on all fucking cylinders. It was probably the most fun we have had playing a show. The sound was great, the crowd was fucking crazy, and the stage felt like home. I ran down into the crowd during Sorrow and hopped up and started playing on top of the bar. I look down and Mike from Agent Orange starts strumming my guitar for me while I am on top of the bar. We get into Rebel Yell and bring some people up on the stage and close it out with Dave from Bleed the Dream, Chris and Patrick from Alcatraz records. We line up like it was the last day of a tour with everyone on stage guitars out all butt rock style. A fucking blast.

So as we are getting our gear off stage for Agent Orange they invite Kevin Lyman on stage to announce the battle of the bands winners in Alaska. We hear him say "I get to see a lot of music in a lot of different places and sometimes it takes coming to Alaska to see what you have pretty much in your own backyard with Longway. Then...a moment of clarity. Hindsight almost makes this moment seem suspended. Kevin Lyman, then says...

"So we are gonna Longway to come out and play the entire 2009 Warped Tour".


Jaws drop. No one can fucking believe it. Kevin has a rep for pulling in bands, but we never thought we would be on the receiving end



of it. We cemented a spot on the longest running festival tour ever-from the owner himself. Epic.

After a healthy dose of partying, boozing, and maybe even a little dancing, the venue closes and we all head back to sit stupefied by what just happened.

Sunday, May 18th, 2008 - Anchorage, Big Lake and flight home to LA

What the fuck??? Did last night really happen??? We woke up and walked down to Hogg's breakfast joint with Vinn from Pilot Touhill. We decided that Vinn is the new keyboard player in the band. He is bad ass and we don't have a keyboard player. We gave the waitresses a hard time and they fired right back. Good ole dive restaurants always have the biggest smart ass old women for waitresses and we fucking love it. Headed back to the penthouse and waited for the Alcatraz crew to head off to big lake to do a little relaxing before we had to get back on the plane. We cooked up some of the fish that we caught on Thursday and checked out some of the video tape from the show on Saturday. The NotMtv.com guys let us steal their camera for a bit. We did an interview with them to cap off the week, and spent the rest of the time looking at an amazing view of Big Lake and talking about how bad we don't want to leave. We loaded up everything and headed to the airport to board a full plane back to LA. We get home at about 7 in the morning tomorrow. Gonna head back to real life! Longway is officially fans of Alaska... 

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PHOTO: SCOTT HARRISON

THE BRIGGS

By John B. Moore

As a 14-year old, Joey LaRocca would spend hours at a time singing along to The Mighty Mighty Bosstones in his bedroom. It was a pretty amazing moment then to have Bosstones front man Dickie Barrett sing back up vocals with LaRocca for his band on their latest record.

In fact, musical heroes of LaRocca and his band mates pop up all over the place on The Briggs' third offering, "Come All You Madmen."

The Briggs, made up of LaRocca, his guitarist brother Jason, drummer Chris Arredondo and bassist Ryan Roberts, still include plenty of maritime imagery on the new record - a staple of the band - but have also expanded their sound to better replicate their live shows (I know. Every band says this, but in The Briggs'

case, it's actually true).

Joey LaRocca spoke with *AMP* recently about "Come All You Madmen," rocking with your musical idols and how two brothers can play in a band and still remain fistfight free.

"Come All You Madmen" definitely sounds a little different from your earlier records. Did you have a different approach to the record, either writing it or recording it?

Actually we took a different approach to both. First off, we wrote this record mostly on the road which is something we've never really done before, but just due to our insane touring schedule we decided to use our down time to write a record. That was definitely a different approach and we also had a different vision for this record. We wanted to be a little bit more immediate and urgent, to make it as live a feeling as possible. I feel like a lot of times when bands record you lose that energy. So we tried to capture that as much as possible, by doing a lot of full band takes rather than recording those parts separately.

And that's something that was pretty new to you?

Yeah, normally we approach it a little too sterile and this time we tried to get a little more raw feeling. It does have a different sound than the earlier records. It's a little more dark, a little more fresh, it's not as influenced. I feel more like we're finding our own sound.

There are some strong political songs on the record. Were you inspired a lot by news events?

Yeah. You can't help but be inspired by

the world around you and I think that there's a lot going on, especially being Americans and it hits home pretty hard. When we tour in Europe, people have such a slanted view on us as soon as you say you're an American. They just give us so much shit for it. It's such a touchy subject and that came out on this record a little more.

As a band, how do you typically write your songs?

It's not very much collaborative in terms of lyrics. It's usually myself or my brother Jason. We each write our own songs, and then we bring that idea to the band and everyone collaborates musically on it.

You have a lot of very cool guests on this record, like Dickey Barrett (the Bosstones) and Ken Casey (the Dropkick Murphys). Is that something that came about as you were writing the songs or did you decide to add them at the last minute?

We've done three tours with the Dropkicks in the last year, so we've become pretty good friends with those guys, and Bad Religion – because Brian Baker plays a little guitar in there – we toured with them and it was very kind of spur of the moment. We didn't have it planned. We were playing a show with Bad Religion at the House of Blues and Brian was like, "I want to play something on the record, I don't care what." Same thing with Dickey, because (fellow Bosstones) Joe Gittleman was producing and they were talking and Dickey said, "I have time today if you want me to sing something. I want to be involved." It was rad. It was like everyone wanted to have a part and we were more than happy... All these moments (in these songs) just seemed to be perfect for these people.

I know you've been playing with a lot of these bands for years now. Is it still cool to think that you're touring with Bad Religion or the Dropkick Murphys or working side by side with Joe Gittleman?

Unless you're really jaded, you take a step back and say, "This is fucking rad!" When I was 14 years old I would listen to the Bosstones in my room for hours, so of course those things are still cool. I still get very inspired by people I've been listening to for years. It still has that little bit of starstruck-ness, no matter how long I've known some people.

It's also got to be cool, knowing some of your musical heroes now listen to your music.

Absolutely. It's always cool to know that people that you admire have an

admiration for your art as well. That's definitely a good feeling.

Now, you guys have worked with Joe Gittleman before right?

This is actually our third record with him.

Is it a pretty easy relationship at this point?

Yeah, absolutely. When we were still first thinking about the record, we thought about a couple of different producers, but it's really comfortable with Joe because we've worked with him so many times before. We've developed a really comfortable relationship. He seems to get what we're trying to convey. I feel like he's practically a part of the band at this point. He's been with us almost from the beginning. He has grown with us.

I've got to apologize for this next question, because you're bound to have gotten it before, but is it ever difficult being in a band with your brother?

I think for

us it's definitely a positive thing. I can imagine for 90 percent of the people out there that it wouldn't be a good idea.

When you think of The Kinks, Oasis or the Black Crowes, it always seems to end in a fistfight, at some point.

Exactly. But, we've always been in bands together as kids, so it's just natural. It doesn't have any adverse effects. Obviously we don't always get along great, but neither do any band members. Anybody you spend months at a time in a van with, you're not always going to get along, at all times. It's almost a little easier, because there's no filter, you will probably be a lot more honest with each other than you would be with others. I can easily say, "That sucks," or "That's just terrible," and I don't think I could say that to anyone else.

You guys are going to be on Warped this summer, right.


Yeah, this will be our third time, but we've never played the whole thing before... It's going to be quite an interesting endeavor. 



PHOTO: REBECCA CARTER



TAKE THE CROWN

By Jacob Round

Let's get the formalities out of the way. What's your name and what do you do in Take The Crown?

My name is James, I play bass and synth in Take the Crown.

You guy just dropped your new record "RELAPSE REACT" on Rise Records, tell me about who you recorded it with and the way you approached the record.

We recorded with producer Kris Crummett (Fear Before the March of Flames, Drop Dead Gorgeous) who had a great understanding of what we wanted to do with the record. We spent countless hours in our studio at home writing and rewriting our songs until we were satisfied with them. Spending so much time on the creative process really helped us to focus on tones and programming in the studio.

Rise is a great label with so many great heavy acts. You guys are

definitely a step in a different direction for them. Tell me about how you got into using keys, synth and other electronica type sounds.

Craig at Rise definitely knew what he was getting into when he signed us. We're not a metal band. Though we have heavy elements in our songs, we knew we wanted to break away from the screamo genre that is so present in Orange County. For this record, synth took a step up and plays a major role in defining our sound, often times utilizing multiple synths and programming.

The Southern California music scene can be pretty brutal for up and coming bands. On any given night you're competing with national shows going on within 45 minutes of you. What was it like coming up in Orange County? Do you find it tougher than other markets?

Yes. It is not easy to be a new band in Orange County. However, we have been lucky enough to get on some really great

shows and build a solid fanbase. We owe a lot to our friends.

Aside from the Emarosa tour that will be in full swing with this article streets, what are Take The Crown's immediate plans?

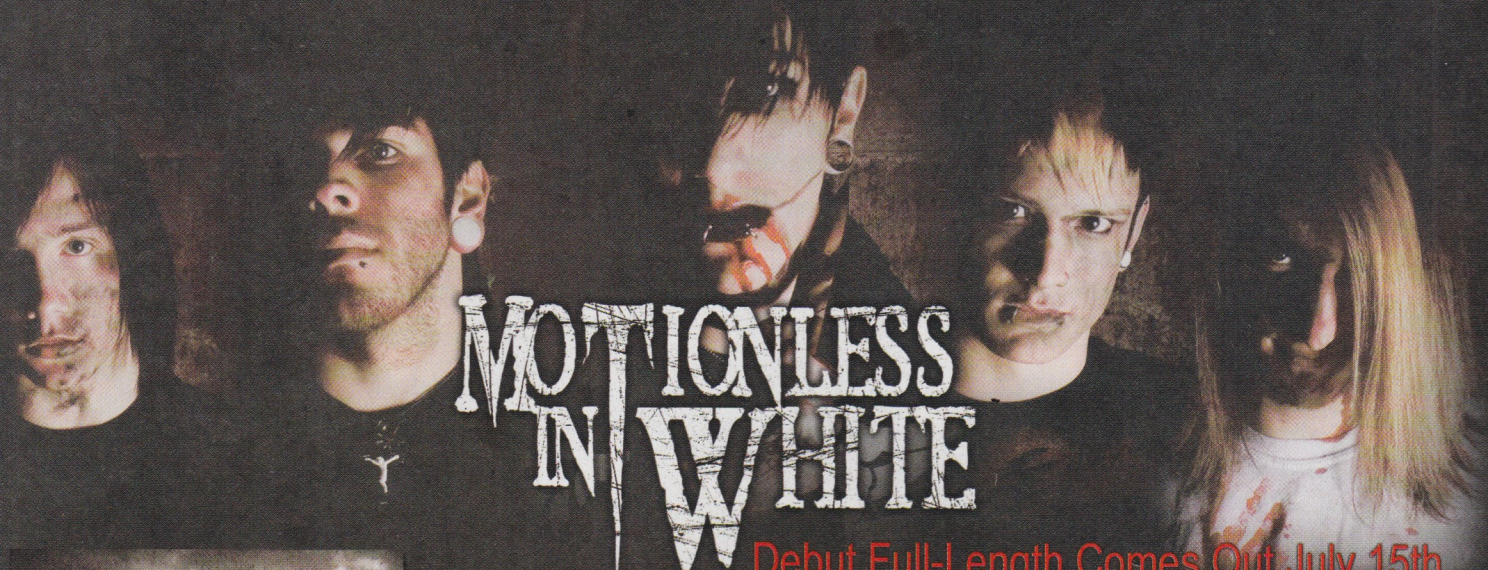
Tour. Tour. Tour. We've been trying to keep ourselves as busy as possible; writing songs in the van, improving our gear, whatever we can do to keep us going forward.

What bands are you dying to tour with and why?

We would "die" to tour with The Beatles... it could be like a co-headlining tour through heaven...the cherubs would eat that up. We're still waiting for Paul and Ringo's people to confirm with us. Maybe Elliott Smith could be a support act. I don't know, it's still in the works.

Anything you'd like scream out to wrap this thing up?

No, we're not screamo. 

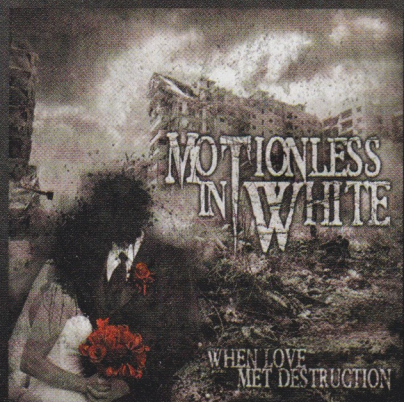


MOTIONLESS IN WHITE

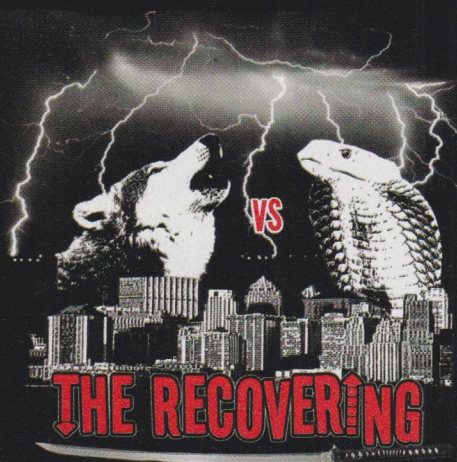
Debut Full-Length Comes Out July 15th

Motionless In White's debut full-length album "When Love Met Destruction" kicks in the teeth with nonstop heart pounding energy. Combining Hard hitting breakdowns, crucial melodies and an electronic look at the unexplored, "When Love Met Destruction" brilliantly challenges the boundaries of the Screamo, Hardcore and Metal genres of today. Lock up your daughters cause Motionless In White is coming to town!

Make sure you check out Motionless In White on this year's **Vans Warped Tour**. The dates the band will be playing are posted on their myspace @ www.myspace.com/motionlessinwhite



THE RECOVERING



Debut Full-Length Comes Out August 12th

The Recovering's debut full-length album "Wolf VS. Cobra" is all revved up with true gritty Rock and Roll appeal. Sporting all the guts and glory of Black Sabbath and Iggy Pop, a back bone like Nirvana, and melodic sensibilities like the Beatles and Weezer!

Make sure you check out The Recovering on this year's **Vans Warped Tour**. The dates the band will be playing are posted on their myspace @ www.myspace.com/therecovering.

STAY VOCAL: BRINGING REUSE TO THE MUSIC WORLD

Who Are The Real Patriots?

By Alex Eaves

Next time you get upset about how much you have to spend on gas, or how little your house sold for, or how much corn on the cob costs now, take a look at tags inside your clothing or the label on the back of your TV.

Recently, I was sitting in a coffee shop in downtown Chico, trying to escape from things for a little while and enjoy some time alone. But soon after I sat down, a group of people at the table next to me began discussing current conditions in the U.S. As one of them complained how awful things were here, another tried to prove how much better things were in Australia. All I could do was think about the same question I ask of a lot of people: "What are YOU doing to make this country any better?"

When I started STAY VOCAL, my goal was to help give people a voice to bring out positive change. Many people think that their voice doesn't matter and many people just sit and watch as the world passes them by. But if anything is going to change and if this country is going to get any better, people need to actually DO something.

We've all heard about how horrible the current state of the U.S. economy is. The situation is very evident in the music world, as bands aren't selling music and concert tickets like they once were. The US dollar is simply worth far less than it has been in years. And almost everyone, including the president, seems to be missing the real obvious solution.

Recently, the man in the big white house came up with the idea to send out checks to taxpayers to help stimulate the economy. Unfortunately, this was one of those "good idea in theory" situations. He failed to see the one major problem: most people don't buy products that are

made in the USA, so the money is simply going to help other countries, not our own.

One of the most important things that I learned in my 5 years of doing merchandise for Anti-Flag was that buying USA made was extremely important. Not only did it protest against overseas sweatshops, it also helped keep the US economy on the upswing. As the band has always said, "It's time we take this nation back!"

These days, the majority of people shop at Wal Mart and other chain stores where almost everything is made overseas. If the president really wanted to make a difference, all he had to do was stand at his podium and say on live TV: "U.S. citizens, please buy USA made products. The economy will turn itself around." He would have saved a whole ton of money that way too.

If people take their government check and buy products made in China or gas from the Middle East, then how is that benefitting the U.S. economy? Wake up America! If you want to turn the economy around, stop complaining about how things are so bad, get yourself out of Wal Mart, IKEA, and Target and keep the money in the U.S. At the very least, take the extra minute to look at the back of the box and not just the price on the front. If it says "Made in the USA," you're good to go, but if not, find an alternative that is.

So yes, the products made overseas may be cheaper, but haven't you heard

about all of the recent recalls on toys with lead paint and toothpaste with dangerous chemicals from China? Things that are made to be cheap are cheaply made. Get it?


And the thing that I really don't understand is that many of the same people who are shopping at Wal Mart and buying countless items made overseas are the same people that consider themselves to be "patriotic." They fly giant American flags at their houses, stick "These colors don't run" stickers stuck on their car and wear "American Pride" t-shirts, many of which are not even made in the USA! In buying those things, you're actually doing the opposite of what you think you're doing. If people have so much pride in America and truly love the nation, then why don't they buy American made? If you *really* respect and have pride in something, you'll pay a little more to support it.

Since day 1, all of STAY VOCAL's new products have been made in the USA (with the exception of our European line made in Europe of course). We've used American Apparel (Los Angeles, CA) for our clothing, Whirley Industries (Warren, PA) for our travel mugs, and Watson Laminates (San Diego, CA) for our skateboards.

With our recent crossover to mainly reused products, we're offering another great way to keep the money in the U.S. and stimulate the economy. I received an amusing forward the other day that ended with, "The only way to keep that money here at home is to spend it at yard sales, since those are the only businesses left owned by Americans."

So some of you are probably saying, "Well, what products are made in the USA? I don't have the time to look at every box." So, I'll make it real easy for you. Here are two websites that list hundreds of companies in the USA that manufacture thousands of products from food to clothing to sneakers to garden supplies. Next weekend, instead of flipping through the Wal Mart flyer in the Sunday paper, check out these websites and start making things happen!

www.stillmadeinusa.com
www.madeinusa.org

If you're going to call yourself a patriot, you sure better act like one. 



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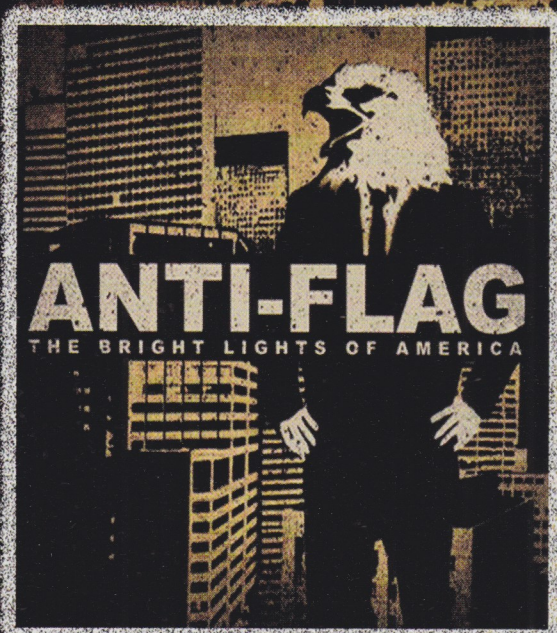
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THE LEFTOVERS

By John B. Moore

The guys in The Leftovers have only been around for a few years, but have already made fans among pop-punk royalty. Ben Weasel, a godfather in the pop-punk scene has recorded with the band, Lookout Records founder Larry Livermore have not been shy about praising the group and drummer Adam Wornoff has been asked to back up The Queers on a recent tour.

The group turned in a brilliantly catchy record last year with "On the Move" and plan to tour much of this summer... but school comes first.

You just finished some shows in Europe. How was it?

Europe was amazing. It was easily one of the best tours we've ever done. The promoters take really good care of you. There was a great crowd every night. We're used to having bad shows every so often on tour, but there really weren't any

in Europe.

Who did you play with over there?

We toured with The Accelerators from Holland. They put on a great show, and are solid dudes. We really had a blast with them. We're heading back over there in the fall.

For those who are just now getting into the band, can you talk about how you guys got together?

We were in high school. Kurt (Baker) and

Andrew (Rice) went to the same school, and started playing with a kid named Bobby on drums. After a year of that, Bobby left, and I met Kurt while I was recording his friend's band. I told him I could play drums, and that was that. We started practicing, and a month later, we recorded our first EP "Mitton Street Special" - which is now out of print. From there we just kept playing shows and writing and recording songs and here we are five years later.

How did you guys end up on Cheapskate Records?

MySpace- its how everything gets done these days.

You've drummed with the Queers and as a band you have all worked with Ben Weasel. Was it ever intimidating working with these guys?

It was a little nerve racking playing drums in The Queers, just because The Queers is Joe's (band founder Joe Queer) thing, not mine, and I didn't want to fuck it up for him. When Ben Weasel first walked through the doors at Smart Studios, we were pretty star-struck. That soon wore off, and having him in the studio gave us a different kind of energy and really pushed us to do make a great record.



Ever gotten any advice from either Joe or Ben?

Joe gave me some good advice that he got from Joey Ramone - if you're an opening band, play your best 22 minutes and get the hell off stage. I found this to be very sound advice and something that a lot of bands need to figure out. Ben has given us great advice on almost every decision we've made over the last year. Sometimes we take his advice, sometimes we don't. Either way it's always good to have someone like that willing to give their opinions and help you out.

Can you talk a bit about your latest record?

The new record is awesome. Picture "A Hard Days Night" meets "Rocket to Russia". Sometimes I tell people our biggest influence is The Wonders from the movie "That Thing You Do". We are all so happy with the way "On the Move" came out. I don't know how, but Kurt comes up with the best melodies. He's my favorite songwriter, and it's a good feeling being in a band with your favorite songwriter. There are plenty of catchy


melodies carried by big guitars and driving beats. I've heard a lot of criticism about the lyrics - many people say it's the only weakness, some say it's one of the many weaknesses. I think the lyrics are fine. I mean they're all about girls, but that rules. I think our lyrics are a little more than the traditional bubblegum prom related pop punk stuff, but I certainly don't think we're breaking any new ground lyrically. To the people who say our lyrics are horrible: I'm sorry we don't sing about struggles and the state of the scene, we just want to have fun.

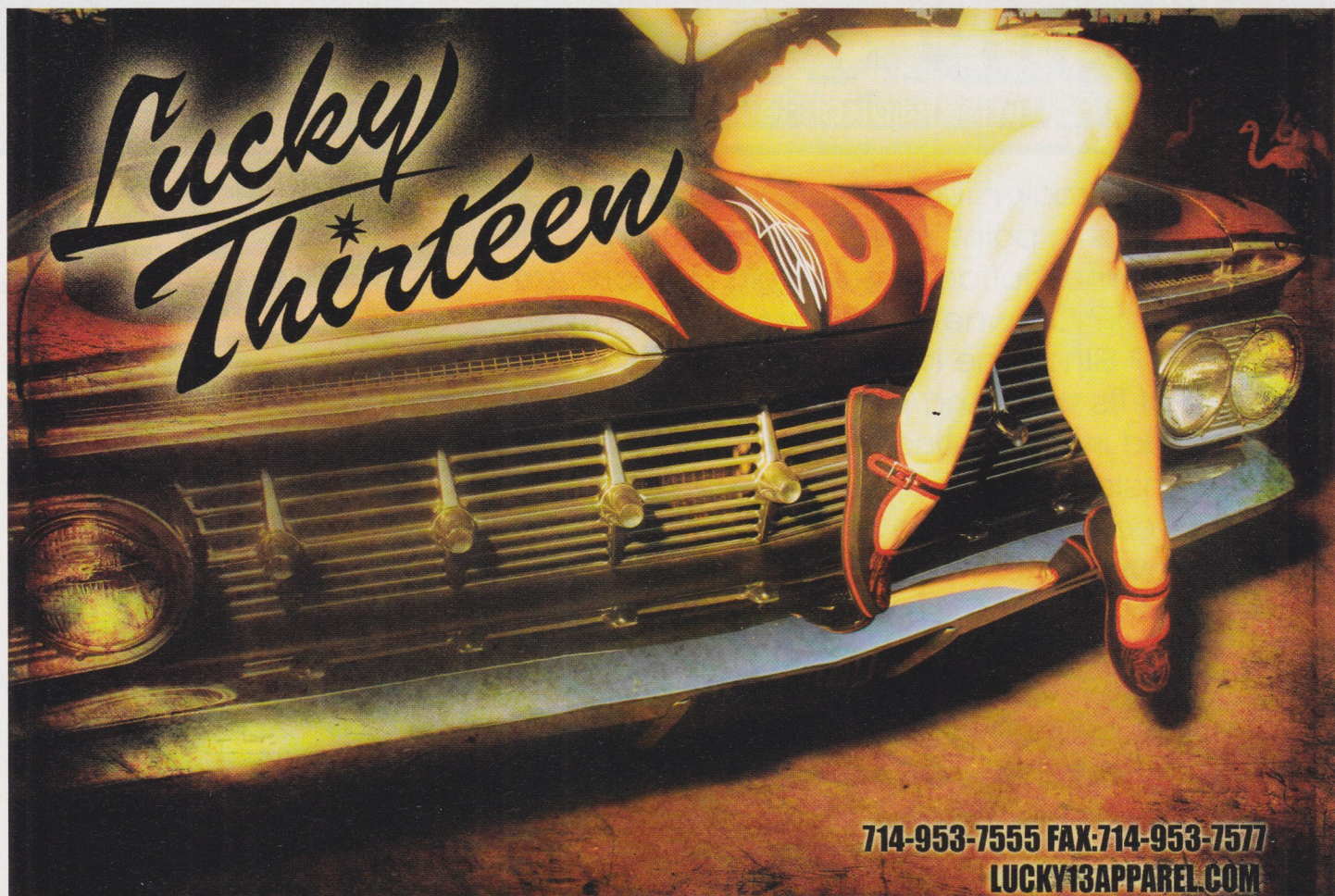
Who did you record with this time around?

We put the record out on Rally Records. We recorded "On the Move" at Smart Studios in Madison, WI with Justin Perkins. The studio was recommended to us by Ben. It turned out to be a great fit for us. The studio is owned by Butch Vig, so there were platinum Nirvana and Smashing Pumpkins records hanging on the walls. I really don't know how the Smashing Pumpkins sold a million records. The studio is very nice. Justin was a pleasure to work with. We tracked

everything in four days, which is a lot of time for us. It was nice because we tracked all the basic tracks and vocals in two days, leaving us two whole days to add a lot of harmonies, solos, organs, etc. The record has a solid base of chords and melodies, but I think it's the little things that really make the album - stuff you don't necessarily hear the first time around. We have a lot of fun coming up with the little stuff. We also have tambourines on every single song we record. We love tambourines.

Do you have any more plans to tour the U.S.?

"On the Move" came out in June and we toured five times in 2007, so we were on the road for the better part of the year. Right now we are finishing up a few shows with the Queers, and then heading back to school for the semester. We'll be writing and demoing a bunch of new stuff, and probably record a new record sometime in the summer of '08. As soon as May rolls around, you can bet yer ass we'll be back out on the road all summer and most likely into the fall. 



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Resurrection Section

Legends At Large, Radical Reissues & Killer Compilations by Jim Kaz

Not all rock music wears well over time. Case in point: does anybody think '90s alterna-buffoons The Spin Doctors are cool? Or, what about nu-metal goons Limp Bizkit? Since the majority of rock 'n' roll is a reflection of its time and place, it's automatically pigeonholed into a distinctive era, which doesn't always translate well into the future. And in every overcrowded scene there are those who merely ride the wave without contributing much to it in the way of substance, so it's easy to lose sight of some of the ones who actually do. Time is the only tool we've really got. Part of the reason I cover this older stuff is because timing-wise, most of it is so far out of my element that there's always something mysterious and intriguing to be found. And when I stumble upon something interesting and begin to dig deeper, there's usually much more to the story than I initially thought.

The Flamin' Groovies are unsung heroes of pre-punk rock 'n' roll. We all know about the Stooges, Dictators, and the MC5, but the Groovies also had a major impact with their gritty brand of garage music—you just don't hear too much about 'em. Formed way back in the mid '60s in San Francisco,

the band would go on to release a few influential records over here, but would enjoy greater success overseas. Led by guitarists/vocalists Roy Loney and Cyril Jordan, the band constantly went against the grain. When '60s psychedelia was



throughout its sordid career. It wasn't until the dawn of the '70s that the Groovies would find their true style and become the premier

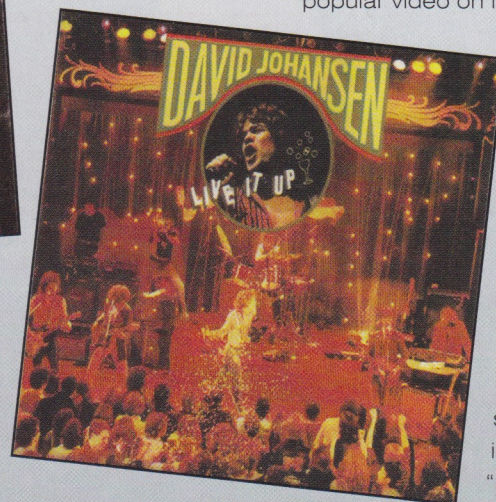
all the rage, the Groovies played straight-up '50s rock 'n' roll on speed, a sound it would emulate

power-pop/proto-punk band we love 'em for. Later albums like *Shake Some Action* and *Teenage Head* still sound raw and exhilarating to this day.

The band's second major-label album *Flamingo* (1970) has just been reissued by American Beat Records—one of the best reissue labels going right now. The long-out-of-print LP is rife with '50s-flavored rockers mostly penned by Loney; stuff like "Gonna Rock Tonight," "Comin' After Me" and "She's Falling Apart." *Flamingo* finds the band still perfecting the template, so there's nothing here that touches later numbers like "Slow Death" or "Shake Some Action" quality-wise. But, you can hear the punk rumblings in the making—some six years ahead of the curve. This remastered reissue features liner notes and complete album artwork.

Another notable reissue is of David Johansen's excellent live opus *Live It Up* (1982). After the New York Dolls, Johansen embarked on a solo career, releasing a few studio albums to moderate fanfare. Traversing styles and trends, it took some time before he'd reach major success by transforming himself into the kooky caricature Buster Poindexter and putting out the eternally annoying "Hot Hot Hot." *Live It Up* is Johansen's finest hour, post- and pre-Dolls. The album opens with a medley of covers from the '60s band The Animals. Johansen's deep, dirty pipes do songs "We Gotta Get Out of this Place" and "It's My Life" ample justice and made for a popular video on MTV when it first came out.

Overall, the material is comprised of bluesy-rock songs with a sneering edge—should we expect anything less from a living Doll? Other standouts include "Frenchette" and





raucous single "7 & 7 Is" is a stone garage classic that was later covered by The Ramones. Love was led by the enigmatic Arthur Lee—an African-American and a friend of Jimi Hendrix—who had a penchant for booze, drugs and physical violence. Love released its third album, the masterpiece *Forever Changes* in 1967. Rivaling even the best from The Beatles and The Stones, *Forever Changes* is a hazy trip that spans psychedelia, baroque pop and twisted folk rock. But that's not where it ends. The album has a mysterious aura about it that's inexplicable. Underneath the meticulous arrangements and lush layers is an undercurrent of darkness and despair. "The Red Telephone" centers on Lee's assumption that he might die at any moment with cryptic lyrics like "Sitting on a hillside, watching all the people die. I'll feel much better on the other side." Yep, this was definitely no hippie love fest. "Alone Again Or" is fantastic ballad with an epic string section and haunting hooks—it was later covered by heavy metal band UFO as well as goth-punks The Damned. *Forever Changes* has long been hailed by critics as one of the greatest albums of all time and now's a great time to see what all the fuss is about. Rhino Records has just put out an expanded version that features the original album in both standard and alternative mixes, with bonus tracks, extended artwork and essays, all in a deluxe, 2-disc package. Although Lee would remain a beloved cult figure up until his death a few years ago, Love has never quite achieved the front-row status it has so deserved. Maybe this new reissue will put things right with new

generations of music fans. We shall see.

it easy with convenient CD reissues of some of this very stuff. For further listening from the new label, check out releases from hard-rockers Piper (featuring a young Billy Squire on vocals), power-pop kings Artful Dodger and The Romantics and arena-rock vets April Wine, among others.

Los Angeles band Love was another highly

generations of music fans. We shall see.

New Wave/power pop band The Photos has also seen a first-rate reissue via Cherry Red Records. Out of the ashes of the brilliantly named UK punk band Satan's Rats, the band scored a minor UK hit with the sprite early

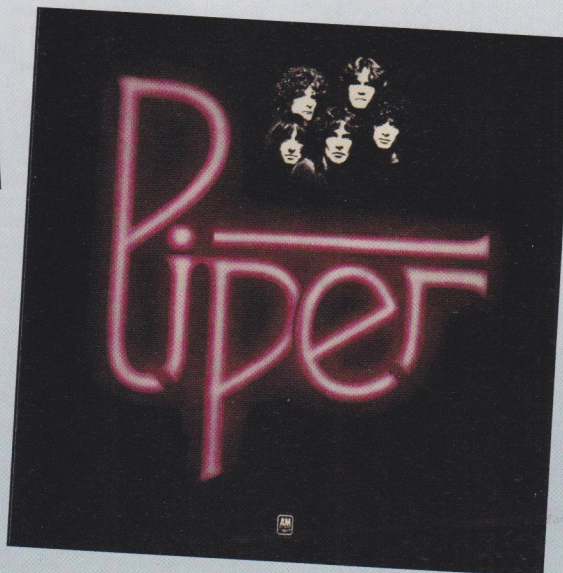


"Donna."

The label has also just released Johansen's way-outta-print first solo album, which also begs for further examination.

If you've ever been intrigued by vinyl you've seen in the dilapidated clearance bins of your local used-record store, but feel cheated because your Dad's turntable is busted, American Beat makes

influential band with proto-punk leanings. Making a brief splash during the mid-to-late '60s, the band's



single "Irene" and turned more than a few heads with its self-titled debut album in 1980 on Epic Records. Scoring the number-four slot on the British charts, the band was thought to be the heir apparent to Blondie's throne in the female-fronted pop arena. But alas, front woman Wendy Wu possessed little of the charisma or style that made Miss Harry so alluring, and the band would eventually wither into obscurity over the next couple years, releasing just a few failed singles to keep its name on the radar. Nevertheless, the album still has a few perky power pop gems like "Do You have Fun?" and "Barbarellas."

There are also a couple of cutesy, faux-reggae numbers that are emblematic of so many other UK new wave acts of the day who fancied themselves as worldly (The Police, anyone?). This reissue has it all—loads and loads of bonus tracks, pictures and an essay on the band.

A few music DVDs have come my way recently that you might want to know about. Eagle Entertainment has been releasing its *Classic Albums* series for the past few years. Each DVD focuses on an album from an individual artist or band in a documentary format, featuring

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interviews, live and studio footage and insider insights on the making of said album. The

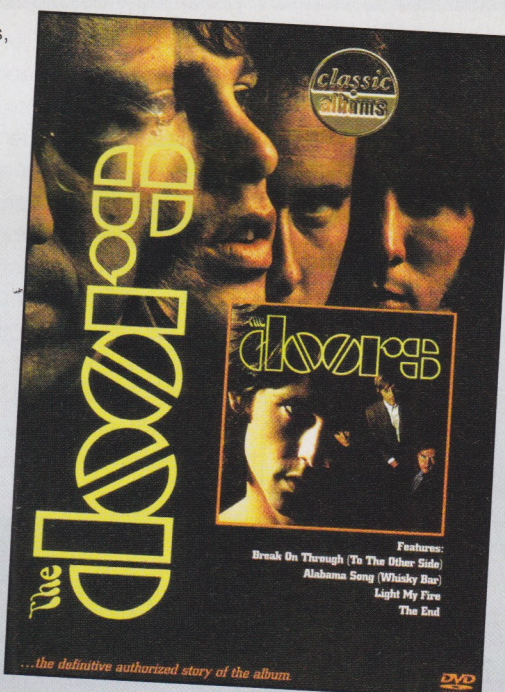
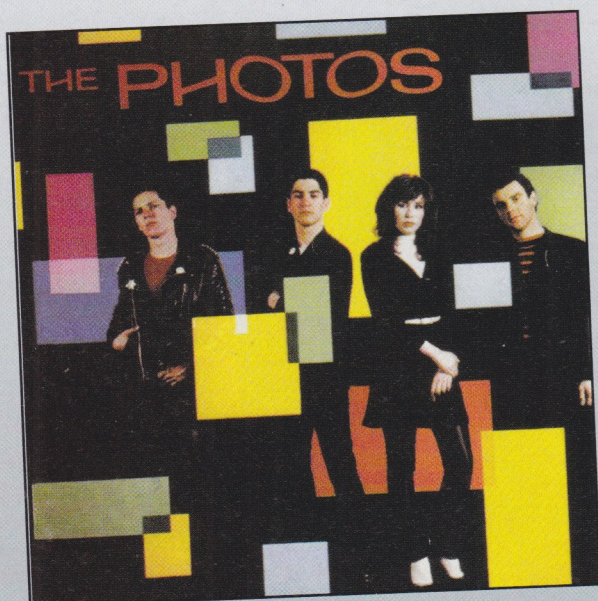
Jim Morrison—arguably one of the true original punk rockers. What unfolds is a fascinating look at the mechanics of the creation of one of rock's great albums, and how the band and production team dealt with one of the most volatile personalities to ever grace the stage. The Lennon DVD doesn't include any original studio footage, as there was none to speak of but does have bits from engineers who worked on the album. What's especially interesting is the tape playback of the sessions at Abbey Road Studios, where at one point, the engineer isolates Lennon's chilling lead vocals. It's too bad they just couldn't isolate the embarrassing and talentless Yoko Ono from the entire picture altogether. Oh well...it is, what it is. Of the two, The Doors DVD is the stronger one simply because there's more meaty stuff in there (i.e., all the excellent interviews), but both make for an insightful experience.

Another historical DVD documentary worth a view is *All You Need Is Love*. This 5-DVD set chronicles popular music's place

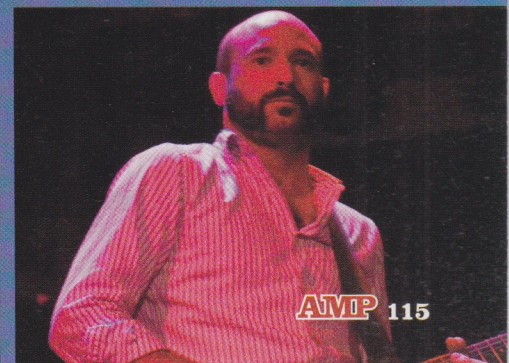
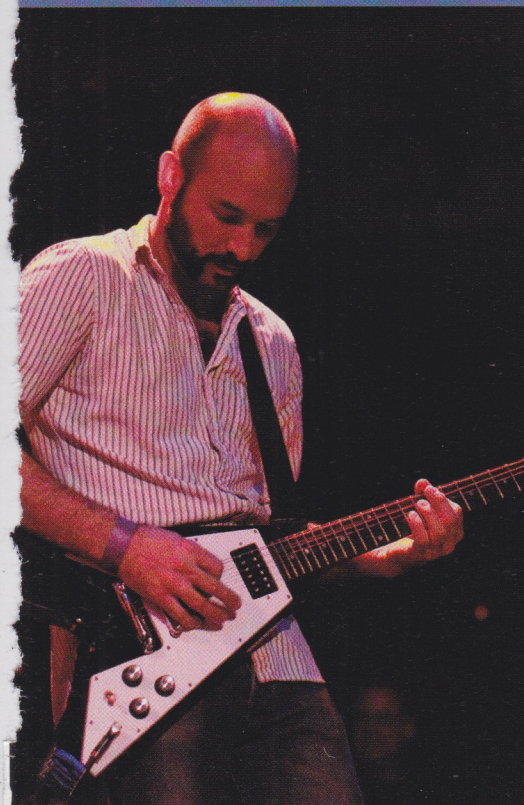
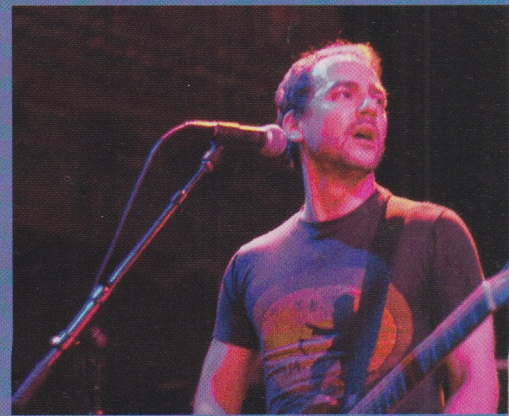
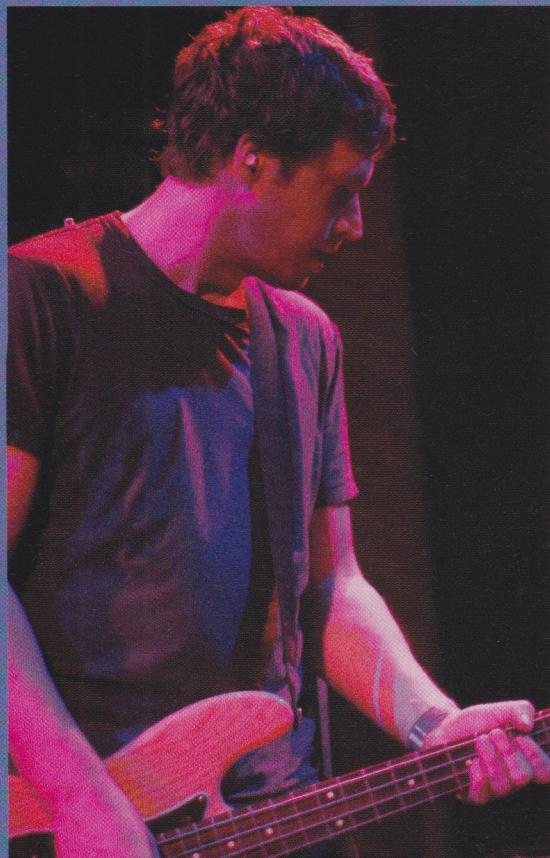
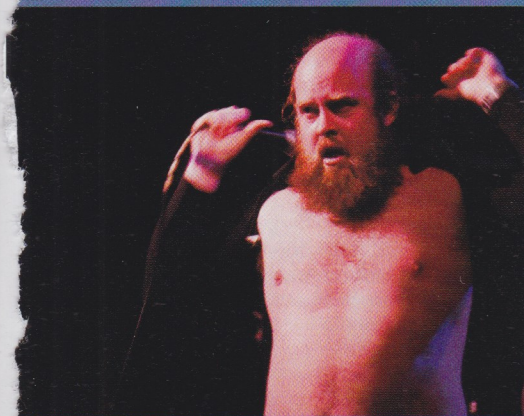
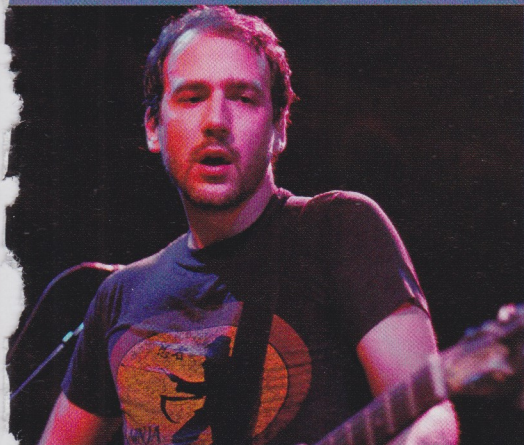
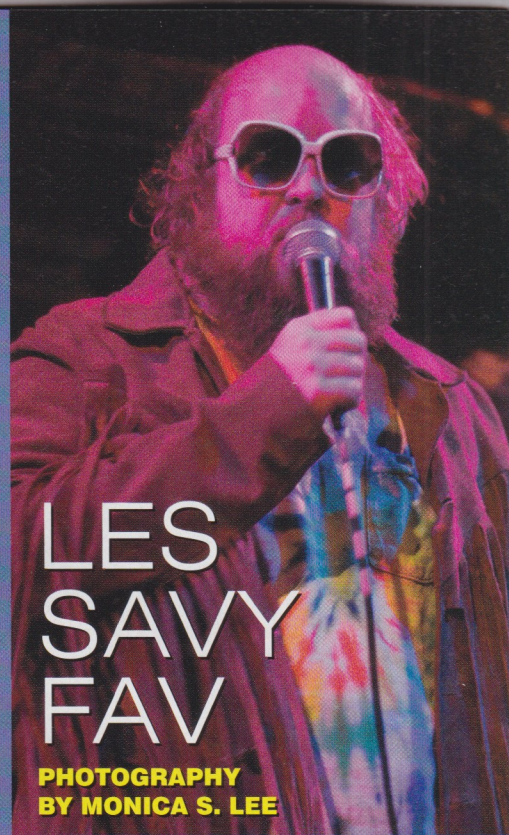
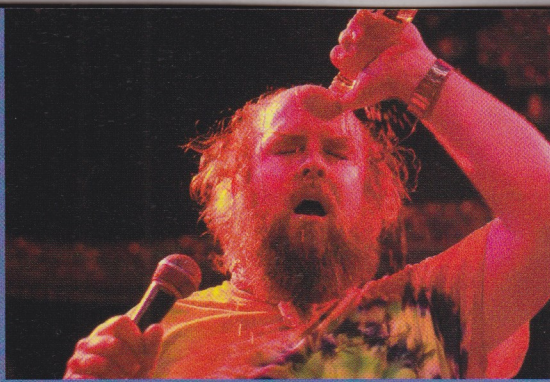
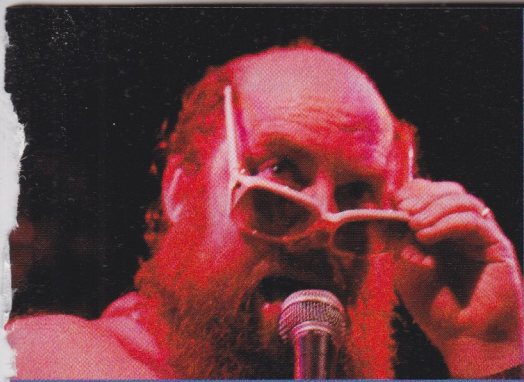
in the world over the past 100 years or so. Created by British director Tony Palmer, the documentary originally ran on primetime TV during the mid '70s for 17 episodes. With footage featuring interviews with John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Elvis Presley, Jimi Hendrix and scores of others, it charts popular music's rise throughout the last century—basically everything except classical and gospel. While I didn't completely relish sitting through several hours of grainy vintage footage, the filmmaker did a fine job in showing how it all connects in one way or another. For rock sociologists, this is one helluva comprehensive set.

With such an over-saturated marketplace,

it's easy to lose track of stuff that's been out of sight for a while. With this installment, my aim is to do it all some justice. So make me proud and check out some of this shite. And as always, for questions, comments or things you want to see in future columns, hit me up at Retrohead77@yahoo.com. Cheers, JK. ✎



Doors' first album and John Lennon's first solo outing *Plastic Ono Band* are the most-recent subjects. The Doors DVD features interviews with the three remaining Doors, plus Henry Rollins, Perry Farrell and old-time Elektra Records executives who weathered the storm of



THE TOSSERS

By John B. Moore / Photo Courtesy Of Victory

Long before Flogging Molly or the Dropkick Murphys decided to blend charging guitars with tin whistles and bagpipes, the Chicago-based band The Tossers had the bright idea to marry the genres. If their just released live record "Gloatin' and Showboatin'" is any indication, the hard-drinking band is still carrying the torch for Celtic Punks everywhere.

Guitarist Mike Pawula spoke with *AMP* recently about the new record, life on the road and what it means to be a trailblazer for the genre.

Congratulations on your new live CD and DVD. What made you decide to put out a live CD now?

Victory (Records) had filmed the show and we're between records right now so they suggested that we get the stuff out there and we were all for it. We're real happy with the way it came out, from the layout to the DVD to the CD.

You just got back from Europe. Does touring ever get old?

Sure, sometimes, when you're playing the same cities and the same places in those cities, but you have to try to make it interesting. Whether it's getting out into the cities that you visit or making your days off adventures or mixing up the set. Of course, it was our first

time to Europe so it never got old.

You were one of the first bands to mix punk and traditional Irish instruments - almost unheard of at the time - what brought about that idea? Did you get a lot of strange reactions when you mentioned the type of band you were starting?

I'm not an original member, but I was around for the early years so I'll give you my take. I think that The Pogues had an influence. It really came from the idea of being able to play a song fast and loud and then being able to play a ballad. The range made it attractive. As for what people's reactions, they still react like we're fools.

Any idea how they were able to find so many musicians that could play both traditional music and punk?

Luckily the core of the band (Dan Shaw, Bones, and T. Duggins) has been the same throughout so anyone who joined melded to

that core. When it comes down to it, I don't think that anyone in the band thinks in terms of "Well I'm playing this more punk and this more traditional." Really, we just play what we think is good for the song.

Were you surprised at how the fans reacted to your sound?

A little. I didn't think that we would ever get to do a lot of the things that we've been lucky enough to do.

Are you surprised that so many bands, like the Dropkick Murphys and Flogging Molly, have picked up on the genre that you helped start?

It's totally surprising to see how many bands are playing something related to Irish and punk nowadays. It's pretty cool. I don't think anyone could have predicted how well it has been received.

You had a chance to open for The Pogues last year in New York. That had to be cool. What was it like?

It was great. How many bands can say that they opened for one of their influences? It was a great night. The largest indoor crowd we have played for and it was St. Patty's and the Pogues and New York. Great.

Have you started working on a record of new material yet?

The songs are there but we haven't started much work. We'll probably get demos done soon and go into the studio in the next two months. We're looking forward to it.

Any upcoming tour plans?

Right now, no. We've toured pretty solid for a year and now we're going to do some one-offs and work on the record and get to know our dogs again.

Anything else you wanted to add?

We're really looking forward to the next record. We'll probably run updates (on www.thetossers.com) and all that jazz so stay tuned. **K**

SAFARI SO GOOD

By Lisa Root /
Photo By David Schrott

Please tell me your name and what you do in the band?

I'm Tom, I bring the noise on the axe... six strings son!

I'm Tony, I just play guitar.

Tell us about the EP. Where was it recorded and what are your plans for getting it out there this summer?

Tony: It's called "Every Fight Is A Food Fight When You're A Cannibal". As far as where it was recorded, let me do some shameless promotion real quick. I co-own a club called Champion Ship out here in Harrisburg where we have a recording studio. So we recorded the album ourselves there. It's nice because we don't have to drive really far, it's free, and we can really take our time and do things how we want.

Tom: Plus I can show up late since we're not on the clock.

Tony: Yeah, there's that too... as far as what we're planning on doing this summer, we're touring like crazy, we hired a publicist... just going balls deep.

It is being released on Takeover Digital, which seems to have a different mission statement than a straight up label. How did you hook up with them?

Tony: Our old band participated in the first "Takeover Records Sign My Band Contest" a few years ago. We've sort of been in touch with them ever since.

Tom: Plus, Ben the owner always has sweet herb.

You have ex members of THE COMMERCIALS and BREAKING PANGAEA. What are your hopes with this lineup?

Tom: Not to break up like those bands did. And as far as The Commercial are concerned, to not have guys get bossed around by their girlfriends, owe us money, and quit the band.

Tony: That's sort of a hypothetical though.

Tom: Yeah that's not based on "real events".

Give us the story behind some of your song titles. Panic At The Sisco Thong Party is a pretty funny title.

Tony: Thanks, I'm glad you think so. Basically when we started the band we just wanted to have fun, and not take ourselves too seriously. Not that we don't want to be serious about the band, but we just try to have as much fun as possible. The song titles are just in keeping with that. They usually don't have anything to do with the songs, just stuff we think is funny.

Tom: Yeah, when bands start taking themselves too seriously that's when everything falls apart. Look at Van Halen.

What are your summer tour plans?

Tony: To bring the rock to every firehall, church basement, and coffee shop that usually only has acoustic bands, but is trying out electric bands just for tonight, but you have to turn down real low, and the cops come halfway through your set anyway and threaten to give you a ticket for a noise violation in America.

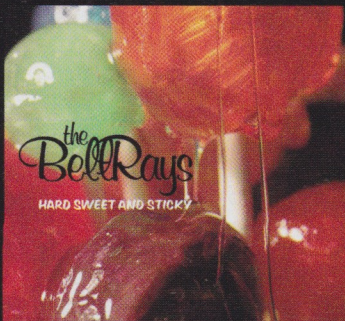
Any last words?

Tony: Be excellent to each other.

Tom: There is another Skywalker. 🐘



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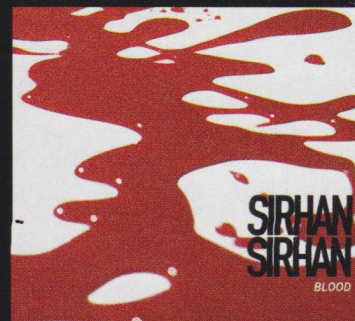


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THE WONDER YEARS

By John B. Moore / Photo By Dan King

It's only been about six months since The Wonder Years released their debut ("Get Stoked on It!"), but the band is already in another place. With a new four-song 7" waiting in the wings, the synth-friendly, hardcore-influenced pop/punk band can't wait for you to hear their new music. Guitarist Casey Cavaliere and keyboardist/front man Dan Campbell (aka, Soupy), spoke with *AMP* via e-mail recently to talk about the new songs, life on the road and sweet, sweet R&B from the 90's.

What can you tell me about "Won't Be Pathetic Forever?"

Casey: This 7" is a lot more personal for us than "Get Stoked on It!" was, and I think it really shows us finding out what we do best as a band. "Won't Be Pathetic Forever" has a genuine message that I think a lot of kids can relate to. Since we signed with No Sleep Records almost a year ago, a lot has happened to us as a band and individuals, and the tracks on the 7" are a true representation of those events and the feelings that come along with them. This is a really honest release.

Dan: These songs are our shitty lives. This music is nothing short of the 28-hour drives and the awful nights at home. This 7" is a collection of our fucked up friends and our fucked up days and our fucked up emotions but most importantly, this 7" is about not letting any of that beat you. "My friends and I, we're all fucked on the inside. We don't let it run our lives." We've all got shitty times. What's important is how we bounce back. Too many bands get caught up in marketing themselves the right way, and trying to appeal to as many fans as possible, and we're as guilty as anyone, but we wanted to make sure that didn't become us, and we hope that the kids who listen to us appreciate us for the right reasons. So far, it seems like they do.

Your debut didn't come out too long ago, why did you decide to go ahead and record and release these songs now rather than out them on your next full length?

Casey: "Won't Be Pathetic Forever" is who we are right now. These songs are the ideas that are currently running through our heads. They came together really quickly, and we wanted to get them out now while they were still extremely relevant. Also, like we mentioned before, we have grown a lot as a band since the

release of "Get Stoked on It!" last fall. We wanted to show everyone how we are progressing as a band by releasing these tracks this summer, rather than waiting for our sophomore release next year. It also works out nicely that we will be able to promote these new tracks all summer on tour across the U.S. We couldn't be more excited for that!

Did you find it easier record your second time around?

Casey: We had a great experience recording these four songs with Vince (Ratti) at Skylight Studios. We had always been a fan of his work on the Valencia debut, The Minor Times records and so many other projects he has done over the years. We couldn't be happier with how these tracks came out, especially considering we did the whole thing over the course of a weekend. It's always tough for us to find the time to record between school, work and touring, but Vince made it happen, and we are extremely grateful for that. Generally, I think we went into this recording much more prepared, so the tracking did go a lot smoother. All of us had been in and out of different bands before The Wonder Years, so we had a good amount of experience with the process. However, none of us had ever done a full-length album in less than two weeks like we did last summer for "Get Stoked on It!," so I think anything will seem a bit easier with that under our belts now...

Your influences seem to be pretty diverse - do you identify more with hardcore bands or the bands from the pop/punk scene?

Dan: I think in a lot of ways we identify with both. Most of our good friends are in hardcore bands and I think a lot of those ethics rub off onto us. We'd rather play a house show than a serious venue most times and we prefer

to book our own tours rather than having a booking agent handle it. We're big fans of a lot of the hardcore that's coming out right now (check out the new Blacklisted and Paint it Black records, Trash Talk, Let Down, Force Fed and Bracewar), but at heart, we're kids that love pop/punk. I think on the new record you hear a lot more of bands like Latterman or Brand New in our music rather than hardcore bands and we absolutely grew up on pop/punk and continue to listen to it consistently today.

You guys have been on the road for awhile now and have plans to tour all summer long. How do you keep sane on the road?

Dan: We read a lot. I think last tour, we polished off something like 25 books, 12 of which Mikey read, ha, ha. We also get really excited over stupid shit like new fast food restaurants in different regions and spend an unhealthy amount of time making fun of people we've never met. We'll seriously get out-of by a car and, 20 minutes later, have an entire life story created for the dude that drives it where he beats his wife and listens to nu-jazz in his spare time.

OK, I promise this is the only time I will talk about this, but how did you end up playing with Boys II Men?

Dan: Boyz II Men was basically an accident. We were supposed to do our first tour one week in August but a lot of it fell apart and our friends in Mile High School were playing this event at Ft. Eustis, VA that they invited us down to come play with them. By some awesome cosmic coincidence, Boyz II Men were headlining the event. They played on their own stage and we played on a separate stage with all of the other bands. The day was pretty fucking crazy. I stole a golf cart from some military personal and rode it around for 45 minutes, we got into an argument with Boyz II Men's tour manager, Josh and Mikey were kicked off the base for not wearing their seat belts and I got to sing along as the Boyz both opened and closed with Motown Philly.

Will you be touring with New Edition if they decide to reunite?

Dan Campbell: We've been in series talks with the Edition about doing a split record that will most likely be out next spring. It will feature us covering "If It Isn't Love" and New Edition covering "Bout to Get Fruit-Punched, Homie." The twist is, the record, appropriately titled "You Can't Listen to This," will be released only on 8-Track and will have hand silk-screened art done by Gary Bussey. (I wish I didn't have to put psych! at the end of this.) ☞

True Minds

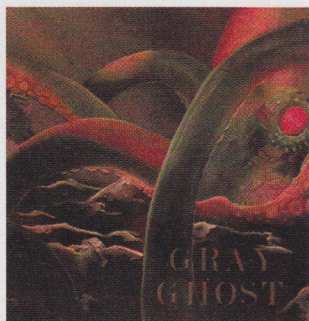
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FIG. 78.—Side view of the skull.

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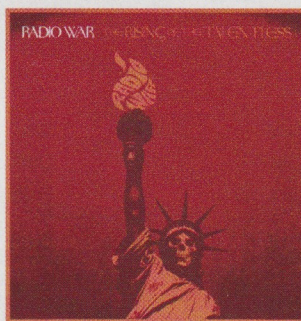
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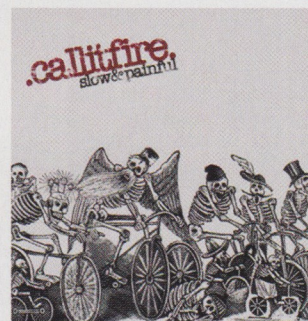
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INTERVIEW WITH KRISTY WILSON OF CUT.COPY.PASTE RECORDS

By Katie Moran

No matter how you look at it, the music industry is a cutthroat, merciless rat race fueled by money and egos. Any sense of family or camaraderie has virtually vanished, but the founders of up and coming label Cut.Copy.Paste Records, Kristy Wilson, Matt and Amanda Sheeren, and Shelley Harris, are making their best attempt at a change.

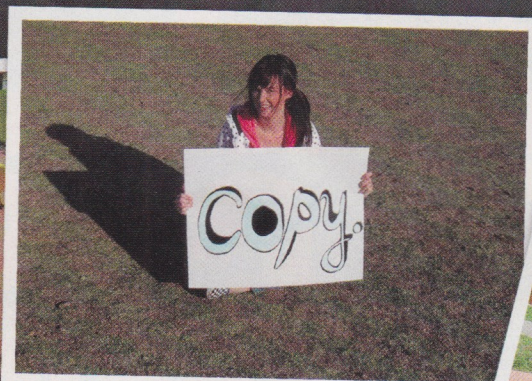


How did the label get started?

It started out that Matt [Sheeren] and I were good friends, and we had talked about starting up a label, and it basically went from there. We officially became a business in December of 2006. We'd been talking about it since the summer before, but we had to get all the licenses and stuff, and that happened in December. Shelley [Harris] was a good friend of mine, and we thought she was a really amazing worker. We had been asking her for awhile to get involved with the label, and after a few months she gave us [Faster Than Fashion's] album, and we decided we would all work really well together. So she joined up with us and we signed the band. Matt's wife, Amanda, also came in for more support. It basically started from an idea that we actually went through with instead of just talking about it. We officially became a business in December of 2006. We'd been talking about it since the summer before, but we had to get all the licenses and stuff, and that happened in December.

So Faster Than Fashion is the first (and currently only) band signed with CCP. Tell me about them.

They're a pop-rock band from Poughkeepsie, NY, and their album was



released

May 2. They've been together for about two years and took a break for a little while. They had gone through a time when a lot of promises that were made to them fell through, and they'd kind of given up on everything. Then we met them, and we all had the same idea and vision, so it just worked out. As far as they're style goes, they are pretty catchy, some gang vocals, good melodies... definitely good for a warped tour crowd. You could compare them to Say Anything, because they're kind of all over the place with the music but it comes together at the same time. They definitely have a style of their own.

Is the label looking to sign any more bands right now?

Not just yet. We want to hold off on looking for other artists, at least for this first release. We want to make sure we do it right the first time and focus our attention on FTF. We still have a lot to learn, but we're trying to take it slow and do the best we can. Definitely though, towards the end of the summer, we will be looking for more bands.

What does CCP plan on doing for their bands, aside from releasing albums?

We want to be as full service as possible.

We're taking on different roles, helping with booking and whatnot. Really, if our bands come up with anything, we just want to help them accomplish it. The last thing we want is to give a band some money and say, "Ok, go record an album. Good luck." We really want to be as productive and involved as possible.

What are some plans for the upcoming year?

We plan on releasing a compilation with [clothing company] Glamour Kills and [webzine] the Daily Chorus. We're also working on a tour to promote the band and the companies we're involved with. We really want to try to have a lot of interaction with the fans, such contests and specials regarding pre-sale tickets.

What will the compilation entail?

The compilation will be used to help promote a tour we're doing in the fall. As of right now, it will include FTF, as well as a few top unsigned bands from the Daily Chorus site, and possibly a few covers of songs from bands Glamour Kills sponsors.



When will it be released?

We're hoping to have it out for Warped tour, and we plan on giving it out for free at various tents.

What is your main goal with Cut.Copy.Paste?

We just want to create something personal, not just for our bands, but for the fans as well. We don't want to be a corporation. Our plan is to bring a sense of community back into the music industry. **K**

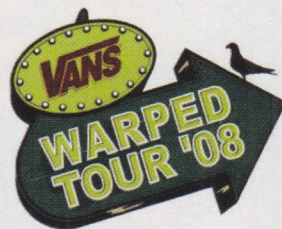


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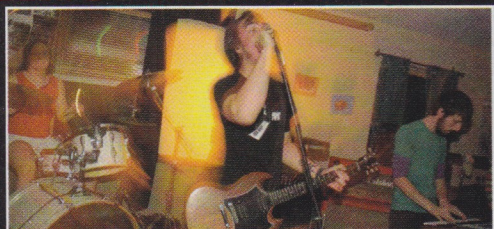
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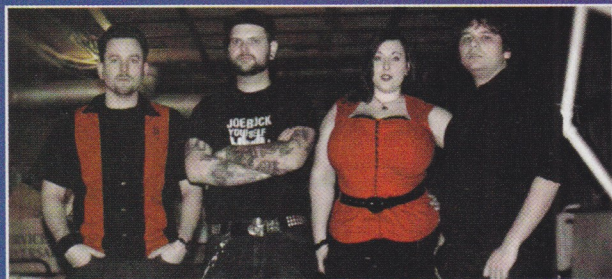
CASKET ARCHITECTS

"THIS IS A BAND DESTINED FOR BIG THINGS" - AMP

PUNK BLUES REVIEW

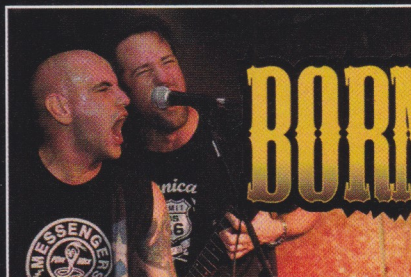
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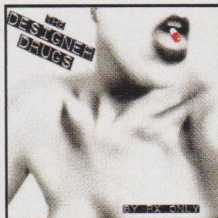
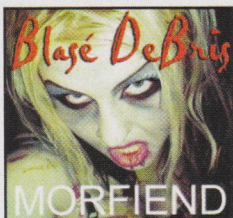


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SAINT ALVIA CARTEL

By John B. Moore / Photo By Nikki Ormerod

Ontario's Saint Alvia Cartel may be a collection of members from a slew of different bands – including Boys Night Out, Jersey, The Video Dead, and Grade – but don't make the mistake of calling them a side project. Around since 2005, the band is about to embark on the punk rock right of passage, the Warped Tour. Singer Ben Rispin spoke with *AMP* recently about Saint Alvia Cartel, their record and their namesake.

So is the Saint Alvia Cartel considered a side project for you guys or a full time band?

Although I play in other bands, this one is my fucking life. So no, it is the farthest thing from a side project.

How did you all come together as a band?

Greg Taylor asked Rob (Pasalic) and I to start writing some jams in his basement on a pro tools rig. I was busy with another band I play in called the Video Dead so I was pretty into at the time so I was a little standoff-ish. I heard the first song he completed called "Pacing" and I was sold right then and there. I knew these cats didn't want to do any run of the mill bullshit. Then we finished a demo and put some guys from our area together and we got going.

Obviously coming from different established bands, you probably had

grown accustomed to writing songs, practicing and performing in certain ways. Is it difficult to start a new group when you each had different backgrounds?

Fuck yeah; it was weird at first for me. I used to do 99% of arrangements in past bands and now that's not the case. I had a hard time letting go personally. It can still get to me but I think it has to become a trust thing. I trust Rob and Greg and let them do their thing. Then I add to it.

How did your sound evolve? Did you know you wanted to bring in a lot of reggae influences?

Well we don't have too much reggae influence. On a few songs yes it's definitely there. I think we wanted to bring all musical influences in general. 'We can't play reggae? Fuck you watch this; we can't play punk? Fuck you watch this; we can't mix country? Fuck you watch this; we can't play rock n roll?

Fuck you listen to this.' I think this band is a big fuck you to the idea of genres in general. At least that's how I view it. Eventually we learned how to blend it all into what is the Saint Alvia Cartel. It's an ongoing process but I think we are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

What can you tell me about the new record?

Well, I'm loving what Greg and Rob have cooked up so far. I think its going to blow our last one out of the water. I also think personally I am in the best place I have ever been in to write a record. I'm angry, hungry and have more on my mind than ever before.


You guys have done amazingly well in Canada - do you have similar plans to take over the U.S.?

If not we're gonna die trying.

Your playing most of the Vans tour this summer - have you all played it before?

Greg and Rob have done extensive tours on it. I personally have toured on it doing merch for Greg's old band Jersey. We also did some Canadian dates last year. It's going to be an experience for sure.

You're band is named for Ernest Alvia Smith - for those Americans (like me) with a poor grasp of Canadian history, can you tell me who he is?

He's a Canadian WWII hero who makes Rambo look like Andy Dick, but he's not a tard like Stallone. He's all heart. Google him. 



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New Wave

9. TILTWHEEL

Hair Brained Scheme Addicts

10. SICK OF IT ALL

Scratch The Surface

"I'M ALL LOST IN THE **PRODUCT-MARKET...**"

A look at what some of our friends in the underground world are comin' up with to make you look cooler, and enjoy your life to it's fullest! Prices and locations of products listed are only based on SRLP, and outlets that we have found them at. —Kristin Schuetze

Jay of **ANTIDESIGNS** created this 'PruSign' design featuring the notorious Prudential Building; otherwise known as Boston's beacon for drunken fools. If you're a stranger to the area, they say this building is your North Star. You can always use it to find your way home; no matter where you are or how many forties you drank in the park. www.antidesigns.com **\$18**



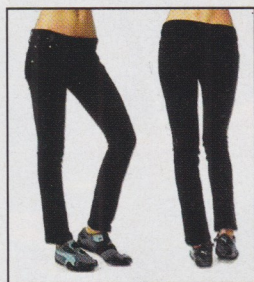
PHOTO: COURTNEY GARTHE

and saving money on both clothes and gasoline. You can't beat that!

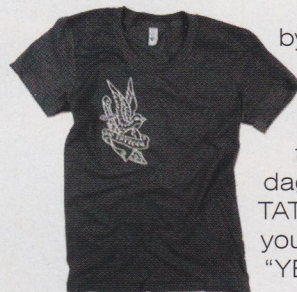
'Animal Jam' (Right) Designed by Nate Manny. Everybody needs some rock in their life... how much cuter can you get than a cat and a bird rocking out together? You'll be the hippest cat... or bird summer with this shirt.



be this



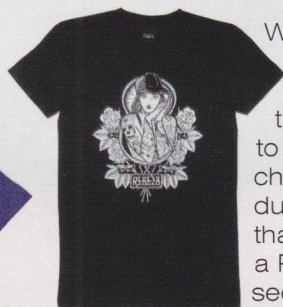
These **Dickies Girl** five pocket skinny jeans are low rise, and feature a wide waistband; perfect for all your studded and/or white belt needs. They are form fitting and stretchy, and look great on boys too... one in our office tried them on... and I have to say I think he just may rock them harder than any girl I know. www.dickiesgirl.com **\$38**



'No Tattoos... Yet' (Left) Designed by Sarah Utter. If it's only a matter of time before you start marking yourself with ink, this shirt is for you. With traditional tattoo style, the sparrow, the heart and the dagger have a banner that states "NO TATTOOS"... Turn the shirt around and you'll see another banner that says "YET". Very clever.

www.buyolympia.com **\$14.95 each**

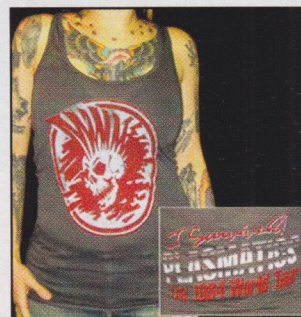
Rebel8 is an awesome San Francisco based company founded by Joshy D. and Mike Giant. It all began with selling t-shirts out of a messenger bag on the streets of the city. All of these shirts from the new line are hand illustrated by Mike Giant himself. These are exact reproductions of his original art; no line smudging from digitizing the artwork occurs and beautiful t-shirts are born. www.rebel8.com **\$30 each**



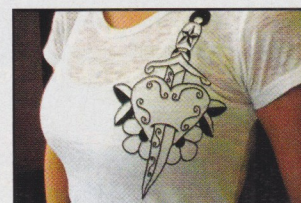
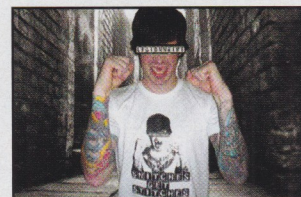
'Amor'

'Please Don't Tease'

With their history of blowing up automobiles and speaker cabinets, taking sledge hammers to television sets and chainsaws to guitars all during their live sets, a shirt that brags "I survived!" a PLASMATICS tour seems rather fitting. www.sourpuss.com **\$29**



Co-founder of **Legionnaire Apparel** Joe Moxley hand screens all of their shirts in a garage! He is also the focal point of this design. We are not endorsing violence of any kind... but, apparently, Joe isn't a big fan of snitches. Who is really? Check out the interview with MXPX's Mike Herrera in this issue to find out more about our friends over at Legionnaire Apparel. www.legionnaireapparel.com **\$20**



With a knife through the traditional tattoo heart, and the text "LOVE HURTS" (Right) across the shoulder blades this



'SEXY SEXY BICYCLE' (Left) Designed by Ex Libris Anonymous. Everyone knows bicycles are sexy, and at the price listed, you'll be looking sexy,

top is just plain hot. Our family over at **Legionnaire** has come out with even more brand new all-original designs. Check em out and see why you want to be part of the Legionnaire family too. www.legionnaireapparel.com **\$25**

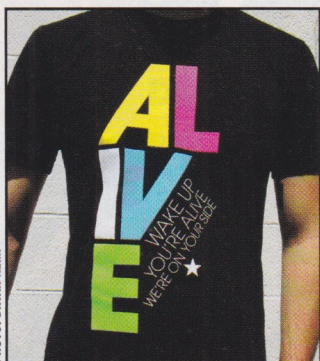


PHOTO: BRYAN KEMP

To Write Love On Her Arms

has come up with a new line to keep things fresh and new. If you haven't noticed already, you will now - these shirts are being seen everywhere and on everyone. This is one shirt that if I'm wearing it, I'd be totally okay with the girl and/or guy next to me wearing it too... TWLOHA is a non-profit

that should be supported fully and is only going to get bigger. www.twloha.com **\$16**

Everybody knows tote bags help save trees, but this one (Right) here will help save lives too. Check out the interview with Jamie Tworkowski and full story behind **To Write Love On Her Arms** in this issue. Become part of this movement and show your support! www.twloha.com **\$12**



PHOTO: REBECCA SAWKA

PHOTO: BRYAN KEMP

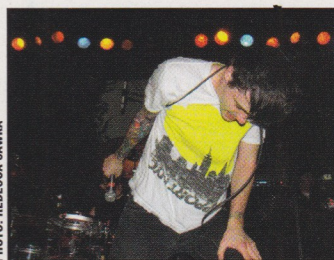
Widely considered one of the most influential American musicians of all time by anyone with a soul; Johnny Cash is crowned on this shirt. Created by **Moniker Clothes** and printed on an organic shirt, this shirt just feels good. Little Paper Planes has a wide variety of clothing, accessories and house-ware goodness all designed by various amazing artists and clothing lines like Moniker Clothes. Check them out! www.littlepaperplanes.com **\$30**



PHOTO: AMY K. FELLOWS

Wanting to give a shout out to their home base, the team over at **Support Shirts** thought up this design featuring the beautiful skyline of New York City. Drawing inspiration from the city they call home feeds their creativity and great t-shirts

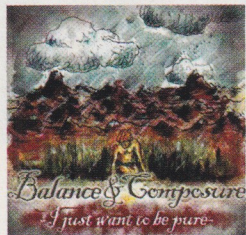
like this one come to be. I'm still not sure what the deal is with the yellow cloud though... according to the most recent American Lung Association annual list of the most polluted cities, NYC ranked 8th... so is it smog, or is it just a happy yellow cloud? Regardless, it's cute and they've got a new line in the works so check in with them to see what's new! www.supportshirts.com **\$20** ➔



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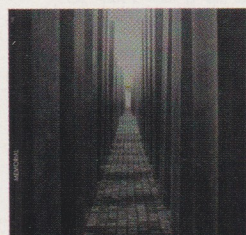
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LEGIONNAIRE APPAREL

INTERVIEW WITH MIKE HERRERA

By Kristin Schuetze / Photo By Jered Scott

It is such a rare and highly sought after occurrence when one finds themselves in a time and a place where their job and their passion come together as one. Some say that most people will never find that. Mike Herrera of MXPX and TUMBLEDOWN, and his buddy Joe Moxley were some of the lucky ones. Mike was kind enough to take a moment out of his full day to talk about how he got there, who helps him keep up, and how Legionnaire Apparel came about.

Why the name Legionnaire?

There's a few reasons... 1 is I guess it sounded cool. 2 is that it's also a disease that spreads very fast. And I thought, "well, that's what we want this company to do, spread like wildfire".

How did you and Joe Moxley get your hands into fashion design? How did the two of you end up collaborating?

When Joe and I met he had his own line called

Meddy. I met him at an MXPX show, he gave me some shirts and I started wearing them more and more. I liked the fact that I could ask for something custom and he'd make it. Eventually he came to me and asked if I'd like to partner up with him and start a new line. I said yes, and luckily for Joe and I, my wife Holli came with the deal and does a ton for the company. She does more day to day work than I do, mainly because I'm always out on

tour playing with the band.

Who is the "Snitches Get Stitches" guy?

That's Mr. Joe Moxley!

All of your designs are hand drawn, and the T-shirts are all hand screened in a garage. Not only is that rare (and awesome!) in a clothing line's production, but I imagine that it's a lot of work and takes up a bit of time. In this age of DIY-ers, how do you think your production practices impact the success of Legionnaire?

Well of course it's time consuming to be so DIY, if Supermega Conglomo Mart ever wanted to place a huge order then we'd definitely need help with production. At the moment we have accounts with independent boutiques and are always looking for that one cool clothing shop in a town to do business with. And of course we mail out direct to people who place online orders.

What other elements do you see as critical to the success of your line?

With Legionnaire you get more than a tee shirt with cool designs, you get to be part of a close knit family. That's how we run things. We also have friends in bands wear our shirts, but I'm even selective about who I give shirts too. I usually only give shirts to bands or a band member that really wants to support Legionnaire.

In your eyes, what makes a good collection?

For a collection to have continuity, a purpose (even if its just to make people look and feel good). Also something we haven't done yet, mainly because we're still a very boutique operation, is jackets, pants and accessories.

What do you see in stores (if anything) that you think is really great?

I'm a big fan of Sailor Jerry. They have great designs. But almost all of them are actual licensed Sailor Jerry artwork. so of course they're amazing.

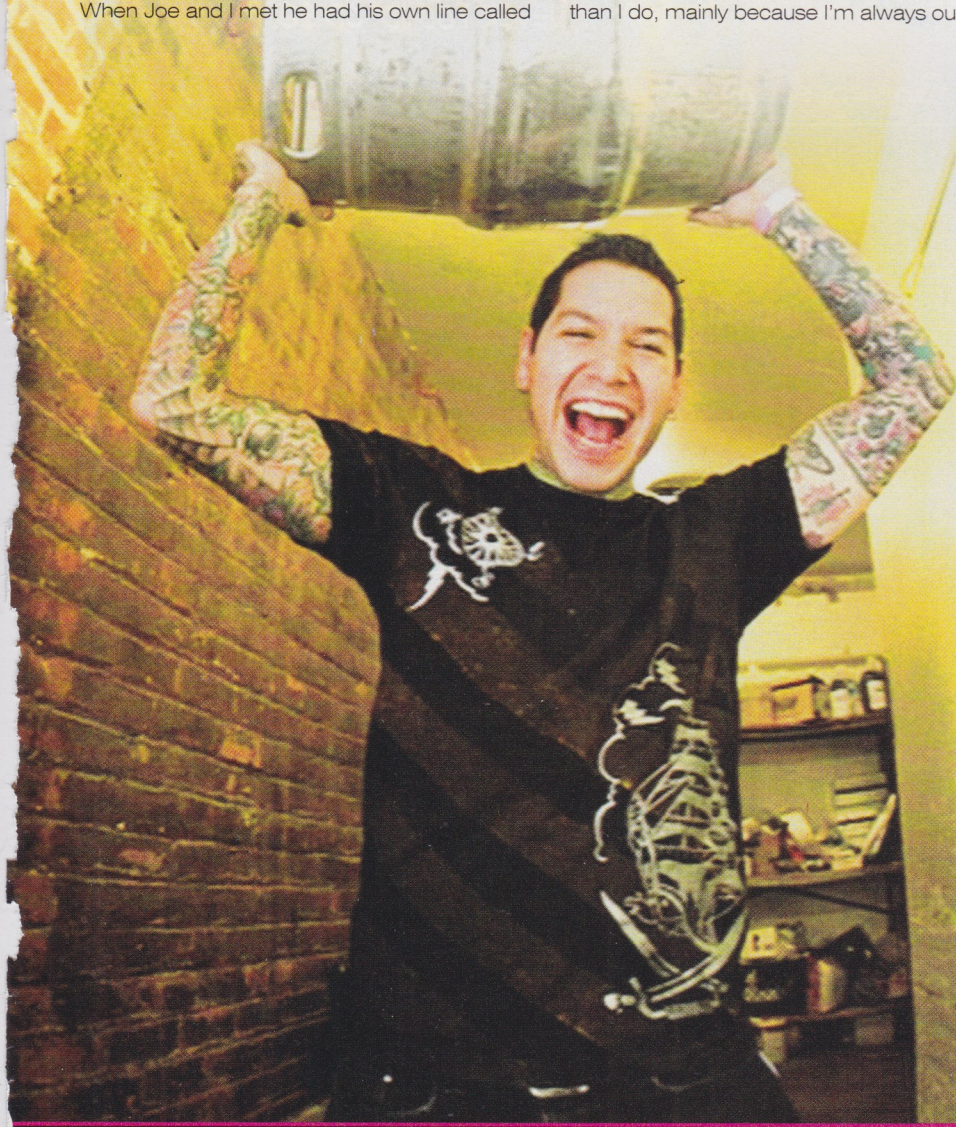
How do you manage keeping up with the clothing line while keeping so busy with MXPX and TUMBLEDOWN?

Being busy is my life, I also have a studio where I record bands as well as my own. I have a lot of help on my end though; Holli does a lot of the ordering, selling to stores, updating the website, and Joe is selling, designing, and printing and sending orders. My job is easy; I help with designing and putting the pieces together.

What else do you want the kids to know about you and Legionnaire?

This is something we do because we love it. Each shirt we design is something that we would wear. That's the whole point right? Check us out at www.legionnaireapparel.com and our myspace is [legionnaireapparel](http://legionnaireapparel.myspace.com). You can get there from the MXPX and TUMBLEDOWN myspace pages as well.

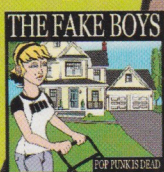
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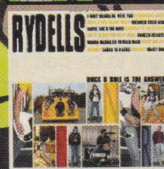
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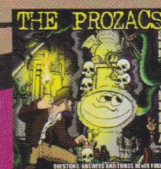
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IF labels could figure out how to bottle the kind of early momentum END THE CENTURY has right now, the record industry would be a whole new ballgame. Hammer & The Anvil is an auspicious setup for what could become a seminal band in the new hardcore and metal scene. They might not have hair halfway down their backs, they might not have arms full of pentagram tattoos, but there's no denying that END THE CENTURY is helping to carry the torch of metal into the 2010s.



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Ampeg SVT-450 Bass Head



Ever wanted a tube bass head but just didn't have money or where afraid to take it on tour? I have the answer. The Ampeg SVT 450 offers the tube tone of the Ampeg Classic but at a fraction of the price.

From Ampeg: In the world of high

performance bass amps, the Ampeg SVT-450H gives you more power, performance and flexibility than any other bass amp in its class. And if we didn't tell you, you'd swear the SVT-450H was a tube amplifier. Producing warm, tube-like performance at

stunning volume levels (it's rated at 450-Watts RMS at 4 Ohms), the SVT-450H uses MOSFET technology and offers a full complement of professional features, such as: Optocoupler Limiters, which prevent unwanted power amp distortion, no matter how loudly you play; and an onboard 9-Band Graphic EQ that allows you to sculpt a tone that is second to none. In spite of all these amazing features, the SVT-450H is still our most affordable bass head.

I couldn't agree more! This head is the best answer for the rock bass player who wants to step up his/her game but doesn't want to break the bank. This thing will get as heavy and as loud as you're willing to push it and you can beat it to death! It will have no problem being knocked around in the trailer or sat on in the back of the van. This bass head is built to last! This is a great choice for any serious touring musician.

LTD EC-1000 ASB Guitar

The LTD EC-1000 series guitar is a joy to play. It's much lighter and more stage friendly than a traditional Les Paul but brings just as much, if not more, noise. The EC-1000 ASB comes stocked with a neck-through body, ESP locking tuners, Rosewood Finger Board and a Tonepros locking bridge and tail.

Unlike most LTD/ESP guitars the ASB comes with Seymour Duncan JB '59 pick-ups which is a nice change up for a guitar player that's looking to avoid the squeal and fed-back you can often get from EMGs. However, this thing is still metal worthy and brings plenty of heavy low-end to the table its just a little cleaner and less crunchy than



them EMG loaded version. If you're looking for a guitar that plays fast and

heavy but with a super pure sound, definitely check this guy out.

Tama Rhythm Watch

"The Tama Rhythm Watch is the first metronome to give drummers the special features they require. And it has enough volume so you can play with real drums (musiciansfriend.com)."

As a user of this product I can honestly say that this is a pretty fair description. The problem with most metronomes is you can't hear them when the volume gets too loud but the Rhythm Watch does the job. However,

I do recommend getting the custom ear pieces for the best results as keeping the headphones in can be a little problematic.

The Rhythm Watch is reasonably priced and can be found at any Guitar Center for about a hundred bucks. Timing issues are a no-no; especially in the metal world. If you, or a drummer you jam with, can't stay on the grid definitely pick up a Rhythm Watch.



AMP MUSIC GEAR REPORT

Shine Custom Drums



Shine Customs Drums out of Loomis CA offers super reliable, reasonably priced custom drum kits. Their kits start at around \$1800 for a 3 piece kit and range to about

\$2800 for a 5 piece, really not bad when you consider it's only about 500 bucks a drum. The company offers amazing customer service was ready and willing to help me at all turns. Their kits offer a nice BIG, warm sound that can be tailored for any style of playing

Shine listed the following as the features that set them apart from the competition:

- 1) We thread lock all of our interior screws on our lugs. Threadlocking ensures that lugs screws don't loosen over time and fall into the drums or worse fall off of the drums all together
- 2) We pre-season and condition the interiors of our drums. We have our own proprietary inner shell treatment that locks in the natural moisture of the drum shell

while also not allowing excess moisture to penetrate the shell and cause the shell to warp or de-laminate

3) We use high-end hardware like PureSound Blasters snare wires and Trick GS007 Throw offs

4) Our lacquer is all UV grade urethane and is designed to weather every climate change our artist can bring

5) We use diecast claws on our kick drums as standard

If you're looking for a reliable, hardworking custom drum company definitely looking into Shine Drums.

Some of their sponsored artists include:

Alesana, Self Against City, Every Avenue, I Am Ghost, Sky Eats Airplane, Forever The Sickest Kids, Drop Dead Gorgeous

Zildjian Z Custom Rock Crash

Tired of breaking cymbals? Well so was I. I've always loved Zildjian cymbals and had been using A Customs until the cost of replacing became too much for me. Since moving up to the heavier Z Custom Rock Crash I've had no problems. While

I do admit that you have to hit these things harder than the A's their durability is unparalleled. They have a darker, heavier tone than most lighter cymbals which makes them perfect for heavier music. They run about \$200 depending on the

size and are a great buy for any serious drummer playing metal, punk or hardcore.

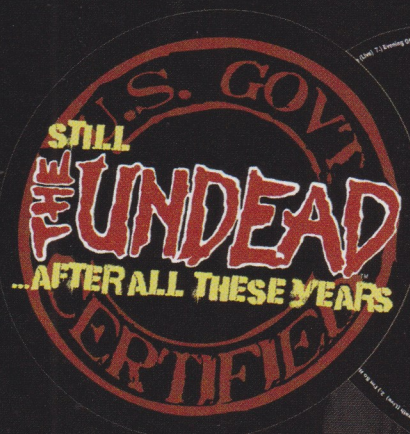


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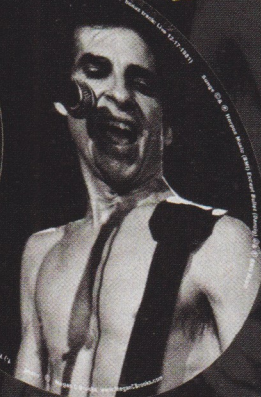


photo © Megan C. Brooks

moviecore

By Jim Kaz

In my continuous efforts to bring harmony to the huddled masses—albeit, usually with a few drops of crimson and a touch of the macabre—this installment runs the gamut of style and pop culture. It's literally all over the map. But seeing as the concepts of hope, fear, humor, nudity and cheap thrills are universal, I'm sure you'll find something here that moves you. So with that, let's get going.



Guillermo Del Toro won over mainstream audiences with his excellent big-screen version of *Hellboy* a couple years ago then followed it up with the eerily poetic *Pan's Labyrinth*. Now he's back as executive producer of *The Orphanage*. Shot in picturesque Spain, this intricate story of a young family living in an old orphanage building, is rather slow and at times a bit dreary, but in the end redeems itself with a haunting twist made more effective through

excellent acting and loads of tension. Laura lived at an orphanage as a child and now is back with her husband Carlos and adopted son Simón, with the intent of reopening the place as a home for disabled children. The young Simón is a seemingly normal young boy with a vivid imagination, but is HIV positive. Carlos is largely caught up in his work but tries to console Laura as she deals with their son's illness and the peculiar aura of the orphanage.

When the family welcomes a group of kids to the house, a masked child attacks Laura and Simón inexplicably disappears. As the film unravels, it becomes evident that there's much more to the place than the family first thought. The appearance of an elderly social worker only serves to heighten the mystery, especially when the old lady is killed while holding a freakish doll resembling the masked child. After an achingly slow middle period the film finally finds its feet, with an impressive third act that ties things up. Think *The Sixth Sense*, slowed down and in Spanish. The DVD transfer is gorgeous, allowing the picturesque landscapes and skewed angles to really take hold and propel the



film above your standard ghost story.

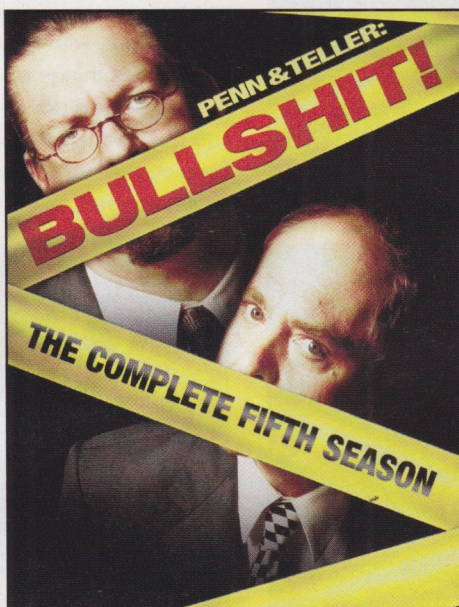
Absolutely Fabulous was a British sitcom featuring two crazed women navigating the single life in '90s London. While the premise may sound typical enough what makes this show different is its obnoxious irreverence and rapid-fire wit. The series stars Jennifer Saunders (who also wrote it) as Edina, a hopelessly self-centered fashion victim obsessed with celebrity, and ex-Bond girl Joanna Lumley as Patsy, a quasi-anorexic,



booze-willing tart who wears far too much makeup. As the pair tries to hob-knob with the beautiful people, something always gets in the way, whether its Edina's narcissism or Patsy's mental ineptitude. As in other early '90s TV shows like *Seinfeld* and *The Simpsons*, there's an undercurrent of cynical, biting humor within *AbFab*'s oddball confines.

The *Absolutely Fabulous: Absolutely Everything* set (BBC) has all five seasons on nine discs, plus the stand-alone specials and extras, including Saunders' original sketch *Modern Mother and Daughter*, the inspiration for the series. And it all comes packaged in a plush, photo-journal case with a quilted cover. Pretty snazzy. If you're open to bawdy British humor with a healthy dash of sarcasm and sauce, you'll love this.

Another TV show just out on DVD is the fifth season of Penn & Teller's *Bullshit!* (Showtime). For the uninitiated, the comedy duo sets out each week to debunk myths, urban legends, popular products and services, in a humorous fashion. This time out, the team takes on stuff like Wal-Mart, immigration,



breasts and anger management. Penn Jillette does a fine job at letting his interview subjects hang themselves by rambling on far too much. While it's not a political show per se, Jillette's narration is clearly on one side of the issues at hand, as in the Wal-Mart episode. This segment tackles the controversy surrounding the retail behemoth's entrance into smaller communities.

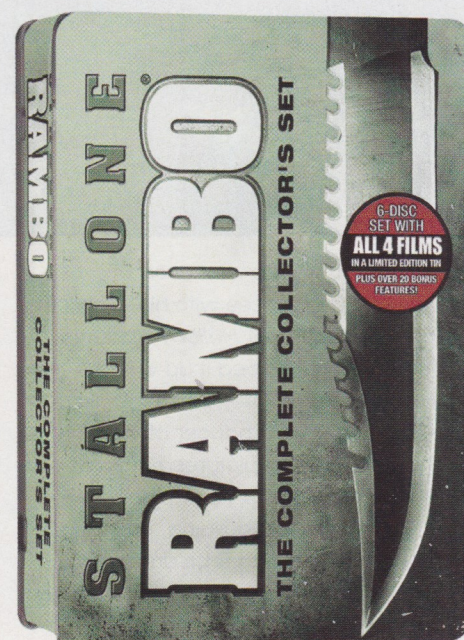
Jillette largely falls on the side of the company by pointing out how it's positively effected otherwise barren local economies. Fair enough, but one has to wonder what snippets he's have left out that may strengthen the views of the opposing side. But if you can accept that and not take every one of his opinions to heart, the show is unquestionably thought provoking, and that's a nice change. At times, Jillette's fervent narration—where he drops F-bombs like Hiroshima—can get a bit taxing, but in all, this 2-DVD set gets an honorable mention for stirring sh*t up and flying in the face of status-quo belief systems.

I've never been much of a Sylvester Stallone fan. He's generally struck me as a bit of a pumped-up bonehead.



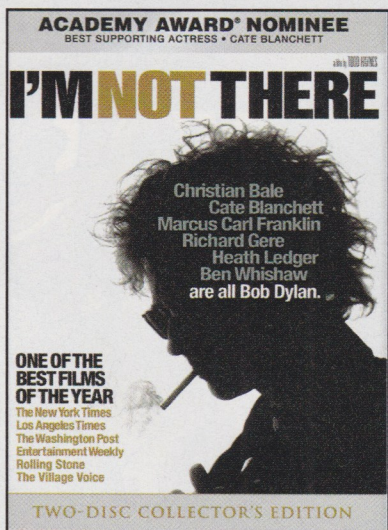
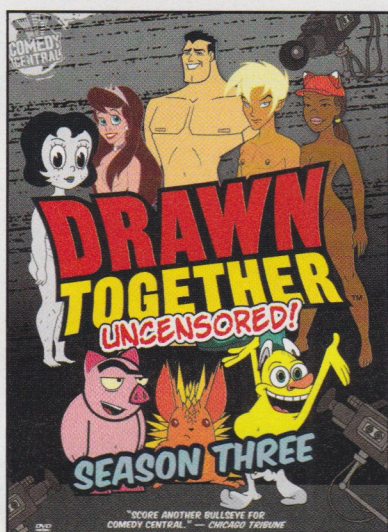
Whether in character or not, he always sounds as if he's got wads of phlegm up his nose and has a permanent glazed look in his eye. He has been quite effective in a few things, usually as the eternal underdog, as in his role as the sheriff in the ultra mean-spirited *Cop Land*. But probably more than any other current leading actor, Stallone is a pop-culture icon, for two very distinct characters: Rocky and Rambo. The latter character's films have just been neatly reissued in one slick, tin box set (Lionsgate).

John Rambo is a disenfranchised Vietnam Vet and ex-Green Beret who returns home only to face ridicule and harassment. The films featuring Mr. Rambo are *First Blood* (1982), *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985), *Rambo III* (1988), and the latest installment *Rambo* (2008). Rambo is



a badass with weapons, hand-to-hand combat and all manner of survival techniques. In the first film, he's accosted by a bigoted sheriff bent on his forced removal from the town. Already a ticking time bomb due to his haunted wartime past, Rambo goes ballistic and makes sure revenge is swift and brutal, and that the whole town pays. To some extent the films reflect the socio-political times of the Reagan '80s, with a heaping dash of heroic machismo and a me-against-the-world mentality. The latest installment is slightly more reflective, whereas Rambo is far less gung-ho, until he's absolutely forced to act. The set includes all four films, 10 featurettes, trailers, alternative endings and a few other little nuggets. Whether you're a hawk or dove—or like Stallone or not—*Rambo* is '80s American-style escapism at its best.

Indiana Jones was another iconic franchise that made people feel good about being American. This cat was far cleverer than the aforementioned war hero and would go to the far corners of the earth to make sure all was well. Like *Rambo*, the *Indiana Jones* series also had sequels, mass merchandising and has been resurrected once again in these times. Fresh off his stint as Han Solo in *Star Wars*, Harrison Ford made the worldly adventurer a household name during the '80s, inspiring a slew of genre films in the process and capturing the imagination of kids everywhere with



his exotic adventures. Jones was also a thinker, using his brain in equal measure with his stunts and gizmos and the three *Indiana Jones* films have held up well over time.

To cash in on the upcoming new film, *The Adventure Collection* (Paramount) features all three of the *Jones* movies, in remastered form. The picture quality on the standard DVD version looks amazing, and the first and best installment *Raiders of the Lost Ark* includes extras like intros from filmmakers Spielberg and Lucas, storyboards, recent interviews and featurettes.

Like it or not, reality TV is here to stay. The bright side is that it's a legit target for ridicule and satire. Enter *Drawn Together*. This nutty Comedy Central series lasted three seasons and took the concept of placing complete strangers together to all-new lows. This show substitutes aspiring models and actors with cartoon knock-offs of existing stock characters like Betty Boop, SpongeBob SquarePants, Pikachu (Pokémon) and Superman. And just like shows *The Real World* and *Big Brother*, the "cast members" bitch, moan, engage in

sex, and consume all manner of chemical substances. But here, it's a lot funnier... and much weirder.

An uncensored version of Season Three has just been released in all its distasteful glory (Paramount). One racy

example of the show's irreverent humor is in episode one where Captain Hero (the Superman character) believes he's taken a roofie and seemingly passes out. When he's told by Xandir (a videogame hero wannabe) that it was just a Tic-Tac, he looks up and says "So, are you guys gonna f**k me or not?" While subject matter like this is often abhorrent, the fact that these loony tunes talk this way on fairly mainstream TV says something about the medium in his day and age—that either there's truly something for everyone, or that society has degenerated far below crotch-level. Season Three features extended versions of each episode, a Karaoke option for the songs and clips of *South Park*, 'Lil Bush and more.

Director Todd Haynes has been known to crank out the oddball flick now and again. He made news with the bizarre biopic *Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story* about the anorexic '70s singer, using actual Barbie dolls as the actors. Then with *Velvet Goldmine* he pillaged the original British glam rock movement to full effect. In *I'm Not There* (Genius Products) he continues to stretch the imagination with a unique take on the career of Bob Dylan. With a top-shelf cast including the lovely Cate Blanchett, Heath Ledger (poor bastard), Richard Gere and Christian Bale, each actor plays Dylan in separate segments representing a different phase in his career. Blanchett captures Dylan's oft-disaffected public demeanor with a surrealistic flair. In fact, the whole film has a dreamy quality to it, presenting its multifaceted subject matter in a series of period shifts and flashbacks. For Dylan diehards this will either be a treat, or sacrilege, as Haynes employs some creative license in his examination of the enigmatic musician. But, for fans of offbeat cinema it features some quality bits—Blanchett was universally praised for her performance as the mid '60s Dylan—and an intriguing structure that calls for repeated viewings to get to the heart of what the film's really about.

As I alluded at the onset, there's no real format to this installment, just a few fun things that grabbed me this past month. Hopefully, you'll be touched in some way as well. For questions, comments or something you'd like to see in future columns, hit me up at Retrohead77@yahoo.com. See you next month. Cheers, JK

LIFEFORCE RECORDS PRESENT



06.10.08

AT THE SOUND AWN
Red Square - We Come In Waves

Italy's AT THE SOUND AWN present one of 2008's most intriguing and mind-expanding aural outings by crafting a unique and unfettered style of music that can only be described as beautiful, crushing and ethereal.



07.08.08

RAUNCHY
Wasteland Discotheque

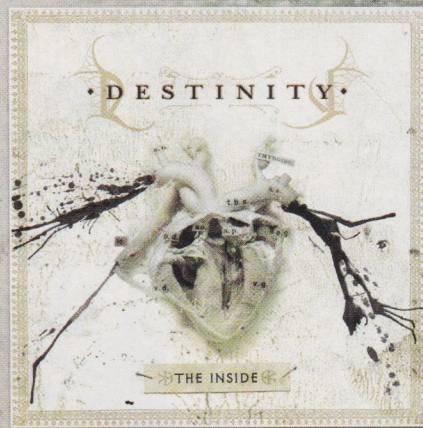
RAUNCHY blast through 12 tracks of purely catchy metal aggression that is as addicting as it is devastating with their highly anticipated LifeForce follow-up: *WASTELAND DISCOTHEQUE!*



07.22.08

HAND TO HAND
Breaking The Surface

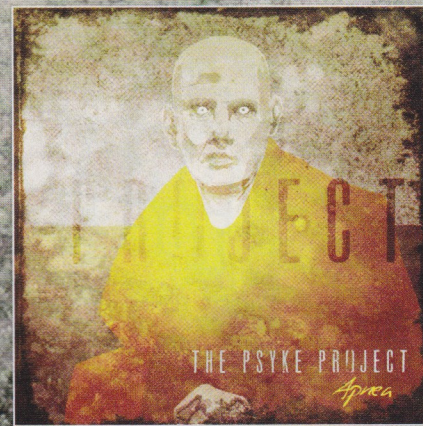
Orlando, FL's HAND TO HAND return with a more accomplished and stunning new release in the form of this LIMITED EDITION CDEP, *BREAKING THE SURFACE!*



06.24.08

DESTINITY
The Inside

THE INSIDE is a meticulously crafted and utterly impressive dose of intricate and devastating French Death Metal for the new millennium!



07.08.08

THE PSYKE PROJECT
Apnea

Hailing from Denmark, THE PSYKE PROJECT present a whirlwind of emotions and aggression that soothes as much as it scorches! Just as the album title suggests, *APNEA* keeps you gasping for air!



07.22.08

LEFT TO VANISH
Versus The Throne

Philadelphia's LEFT TO VANISH creates intricate, groove oriented brutality that is as catchy as it is doom-laden! Their LifeForce debut *VERSUS THE THRONE* is a highly determined piece of aural devastation that set to destroy.

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BEST BUY

VIDEO GAMES

Gaming Gets AMP'd

By William Jones (ampgames@gmail.com)

Most people may not realize it, but amidst an extremely high-budget, sequel-driven video game industry, an independent scene similar to those in music and film thrives. This issue, *AMP* features one publisher that is basically the Epitaph of video games, an "indie-label spirit" with "major-label muscle," as its slogan reads. The section this month also features an interview with an independent developer that created PlayStation Network's best game to-date by himself in a garage before Sony took notice at a convention and offered to distribute it.

An independent state of mind

Yes, the multi-million dollar franchise that added a "IV" this year is now on shelves, and yes, it kicks a whole lot of ass. Really, that is where the video game industry differs from the music scene. The big corporations still produce some damn fine games to play, whereas major label music...well, not nearly as often.

Still, the video game industry is much more similar to the music scene than it may appear at first glance. Essentially, developers are the artists, or bands. The games are their albums, and the publishers are their record labels. And underneath the barrage of mainstream games, there are plenty of artists struggling to make a name for themselves with quality entertainment products amidst an industry designed to play it safe (sequels, sequels, sequels and little experimentation) and make big profits.

Maybe those games do not always look quite as graphically advanced or have the television commercials and fancy store displays, but there is plenty of heart and creativity in the independent scene that would be a shame to overlook.

Jonathan Mak and his not-so Everyday Shooter

The industry at large has focused its marketing efforts on two things: high-definition photorealism and casual party games. Jonathan Mak, however, has found success is something that is neither. He has discovered beauty in simple shapes and angles with actions tied closely to a wonderful, guitar-based soundtrack.

Everyday Shooter is as much a music album as it is a game. The gamer controls a dot with one joystick, while firing in 360 degrees with the other to avoid an increasing onslaught of enemies. That has been done before. What makes it different is that every level is timed to a music track. There are eight different levels and therefore eight different tracks in the game, which, like with any good album, are each totally different experiences (in both sound and gameplay) but have common elements that tie them together in the album, or game.

It is a wonderfully simple yet entirely fresh concept. That concept is amplified by Mak's use of guitar for sound effects, which highlight major actions in the game and are layered in such a way that they always feel like part of the level's core song. Mak explained the implementation

JONATHAN MAK



But first—a few important updates in the *AMP* world of video games. Issue 9 of *Hails and Horns* saw the first edition of its very own video game section. The *Hails* section will be included every issue, with a similar structure to that of *AMP*, while filled with content totally different from that of *AMP*. Issue 9 features a slew of reviews and an interview with developer Renegade Kid, which created 2007's Nintendo DS horror first-person shooter *Dementium: The Ward*.

The other major update is www.ampmagazine.com. It is still a work in progress, but already looks great. The site will be updated regularly, including video game content readers will not find in either *AMP* or *Hails*. Readers can now check out a hands-on preview of Wideload Games' political satire *Hail to the Chimp* and reviews of new *Call of Duty 4* multiplayer maps and PSN's *Echochrome*. More is on the way, so make sure to check it regularly.

of his idea:

"You just find riffs to play on the same scale as the background music that's playing, but you also have to keep into account the frequency at which enemies arrive. You can't have this big sound play every time you shoot a little guy or else it will sound like a mess. So, it's sort of compositional, but instead of composing on a staff you compose to the rules of the game."

Mak is the quirky one-man Canadian development team behind Queasy Games. He develops everything in his garage while snacking on seaweed and the occasional hash brown from a 5-pound bag he found on sale, and programs around certain numbers that are unlucky according to Chinese superstition. He is mostly self-taught, both in music and game development, but attended the University of Toronto for computer courses.

"I don't want to say it's a useless experience, but in terms of getting into games it's sort of useless," Mak said of school. "All the math you need to know is high school math. After that, it's just sort of being creative and experimenting."

He first got into games after watching his older brothers play.

"I actually didn't start playing games until later because I was afraid of dying," He said. "I think I always had a curiosity about interacting with things. I remember elevator buttons. It always fascinated me—maybe not just me pressing buttons but—whenever a kid goes into an elevator for the first time they need to press all of the buttons. What is that? You know? That's the heart of a game; you do something and something happens."

"I like doing visual stuff, I like doing music and I like doing games, obviously, so games seem to be a good medium to bring that all together," Mak said.

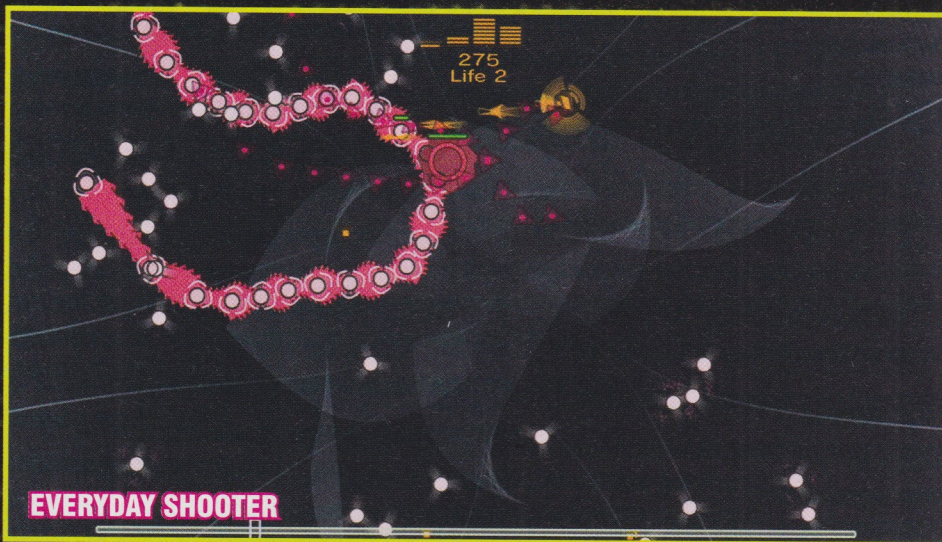
The garage developer found a mainstream audience in 2007 after *Everyday Shooter* became a finalist at the Independent Game Festival. "A couple dudes from Sony" who happened to be fans of *Rez* saw Mak's music-based creation and wanted to sign it.

"Honestly, I really got lucky," Mak said. "I think luck is the final gate. You can do all these things, but all those things are just sort of opportunities to get lucky."

"It also comes at a time when people are sort of interested in this idea of one dude making a game," he said. "It's a good story."

Mak admitted he originally had another publisher in mind before he was approached by Sony, and he was sure Sony, like many publishers, would ask him to change aspects of the game.

"I went through my mental checklist of things they probably wanted to change," Mak said. "I asked them, 'Do you want me to change the music? Do you want me to add this?' They're like, 'No, listen man. You just make the game and we'll publish it. That's how it works.' So, it was pretty cool."



EVERYDAY SHOOTER



MIKE WILSON

Mak said his relationship with Sony has been great and, though *Everyday Shooter* was a one-game deal, he would gladly pitch Sony in the future. Though the occasional fantasies of some company offering him a multi-million dollar deal to develop crop up, Mak said he intends to keep things on the one-man level, with small collaborations.

"I just think when you keep it small or don't do things like hire a team, the work that comes out is so much more personal," he said.

The Epitaph of video games—Gamecock Media Group

"It's like any industry; being indie just means that you're a masochist," said Gamecock Media Group CEO Mike



Wilson with a laugh. "Things are a lot harder than they should be, but they're also a lot more fun and rewarding when you do well on something."

Gamecock is, in many ways, the Epitaph of video games. It sits somewhere in the middle ground of garage and mega publishers.

"There's nothing in between, and that's what we're trying to be," Wilson said. "We're trying to be the best of both worlds—the indie mindset and fierce promotion of our artists, but then having the major-label distribution and marketing money and all that stuff."

Gamecock is situated in the right place to complete such a mission. Far away from the big industry names out on the West Coast, Gamecock calls Austin, Texas—host to South by Southwest and a thriving indie music scene—home. Wilson has a background in independent publishing. He helped found Gathering of Developers in 1998, which was essentially a co-operative of developers working together to publish their own games.

Gathering, however, was partially funded by Rockstar parent company Take-Two Interactive, and the money came with strings that made it difficult for Gathering to raise other funds, Wilson said.

"We eventually had no choice but to merge with Take-Two, which at the time felt like indie suicide," Wilson said.

Wilson said he spent two years trying to find money without strings for Gamecock so as not to fall into the same trap.

"I think it's important that private money is coming in," Wilson said. "At the end of the day, the balance of power depends tremendously on where the money is coming from to fund these things."

Wilson said he sees a huge problem

in the industry and has made it his goal to right that error on some level with Gamecock.

"What interests me in this business is the constant struggle between the artist and the guys that own the business," Wilson said.

Unlike music labels, or movie studios, which often take the fine print in back, game publisher logos are often prominently displayed on the front of boxes and commercials rather than the developer's.

"Our industry, for whatever reason, set down the path of the publishers promoting themselves above the developers," Wilson explained. "It's a bad model. It's a short-sighted model."

"You wouldn't say, 'Goddamn! I love Random House books,'" he continued. "You have your author or your artist that you like. If you're able to discern who that is you can actually form a relationship with the guys you like. That's what we do. We try to make sure that everybody that plays one of our games knows where that game came from."

Wilson admitted that mission can be frustrating, at times. Nintendo refused to bend its rules for *Dementium*, forcing the publisher to place its logo on the box, which Gamecock tried to rectify by including an "about the author" at the front of the manual, explaining Renegade Kid, not Gamecock, created the game, Wilson said. Gamecock's silly name is

part of the philosophy that people should not care who marketed or distributed the game; they should care about the artist, he added.

"We believe very strongly that gamers need to form relationships with the guys actually making the games, not the ubiquitous brand on the front," he said.

Despite problems and a perceived gamer apathy about where games come from, Wilson said he sees some hope for the industry.

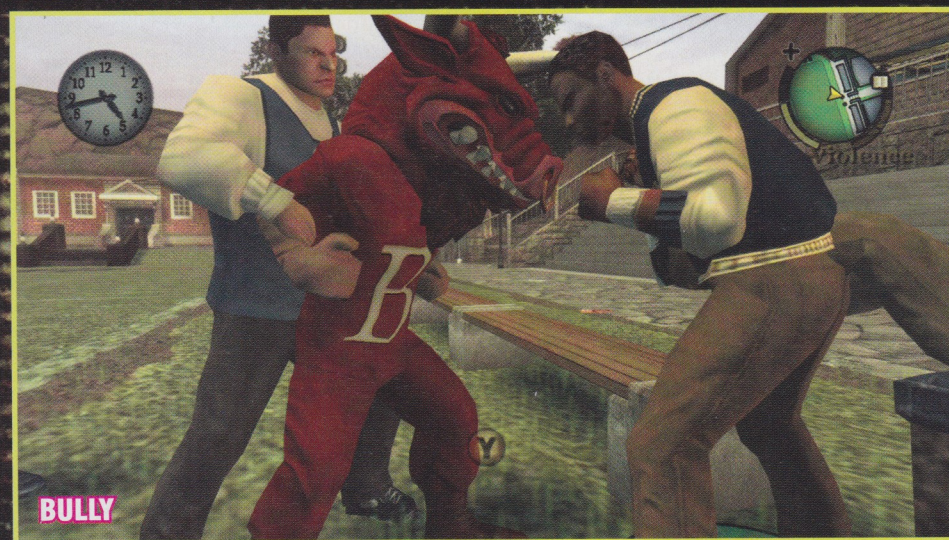
"There's a new cadre of publishers that are not Wall Street companies," he said. "That changes everything, because wherever you came from, once you're a public company, things change. The executives change. Everything's about quarters and you fall into the same traps the really big guys do."

If the opportunity to expand presented itself, Wilson said he would likely turn it down. It is necessary to make money for investors and the artists, and Gamecock wants to, Wilson explained.

"But there's definitely a point where (best intentions aside) if you get too big, things change," Wilson said. "The bigger the bets get, the more of a committee everything is. You get super conservative about the bets you place and, at that point, you're not much different than the guys you struck out against."

"If I don't know everybody in the company and know how well they bowl, then we're too big," he joked.

VIDEO GAME REVIEWS



and rewards, as well as an option to play two-player mini-games (mostly variations of classes and arcades). The extra content is nothing to run out and buy a new copy for if one has already played the original on PlayStation 2, but it sure as hell does not hurt. Wii's motion controls are also implemented well, both in the mini-games and sandbox play.

The graphics are beginning to look a bit dated, but that is no big deal. The world design is interesting throughout and the characterization is amazing. And with all the extra goodies and challenges Rockstar has thrown into the mix, *Bully* provides more than 20 hours of gameplay. Again, *Bully* is not a necessary purchase for those that have already graduated, but for gamers that haven't yet attended Bullworth Academy, it is well worth the tuition. (WMJ)

Bully: Scholarship Edition (Wii, 360) [T]

Publisher: Rockstar – **Developer:** Rockstar Vancouver/New England

Rating: 9 out of 10

Bully may give the appearance of *Grand Theft Auto*-lite, and at first glance, it is. It follows Rockstar's famed open-world gameplay model but limits

it to a schoolyard and surrounding neighborhoods and eliminates (almost) all playable motorized transportation and replaces deaths with knockouts (this is high school, after all).

But within those confines, Rockstar created in 2006 a brilliantly nostalgic comedy with a great script, equally formidable voice acting, and solid gameplay throughout. The Scholarship Edition for Nintendo Wii and Xbox 360 adds more classes, missions, characters

Harvey Birdman: Attorney at Law

(Wii, PSP, PS2) [T]

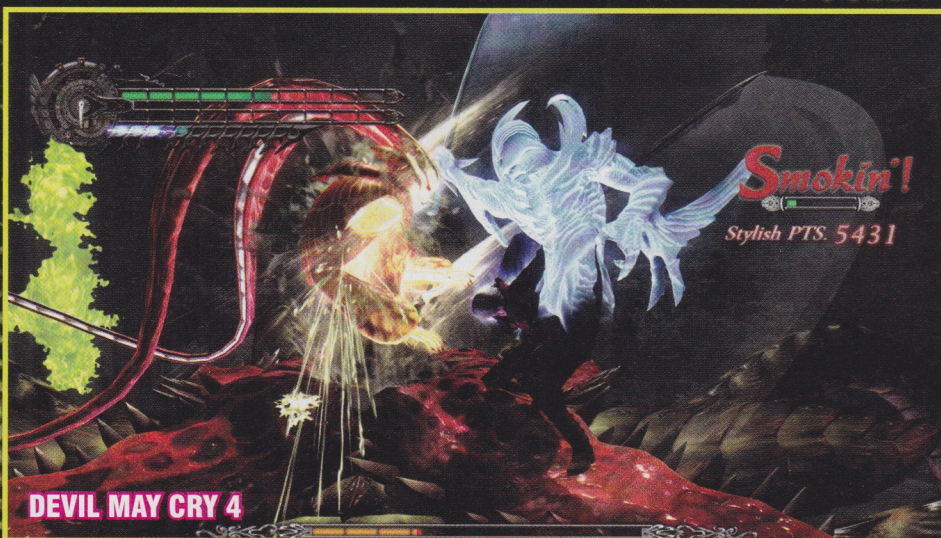
Publisher: Capcom – **Developer:** High Voltage Software

Rating: 6 out of 10

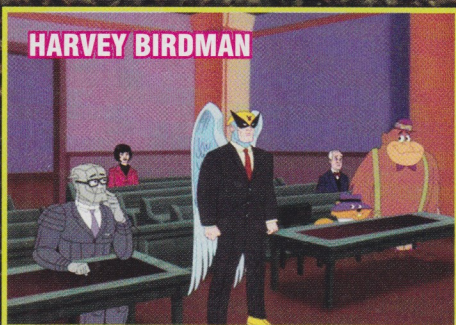
Harvey Birdman isn't so much a video game as defined in the common sense as it is a series of interactive episodes of Adult Swim's cartoon with skewed logic



DEVIL MAY CRY 4



DEVIL MAY CRY 4



HARVEY BIRDMAN

puzzles/investigations that require slightly less work than Capcom's other courtroom series, *Ace Attorney*.

It is funny and packed with plenty of cameos from the series, but the affair is short as all hell. Total game time can't be more than two hours and extra content

is limited to one short video for each of the five missions, unlocked by certain responses in each episode. The videos are amusing, but the game ultimately offers no replay value.

Even at a budget price of \$19.99 *Harvey Birdman* hardly seems worth it. The funny game is definitely worth renting for the cartoon's fans, but when the episodes are over, so is the game's appeal. (WMJ)

Devil May Cry 4

(PS3, 360) [M]

Publisher: Capcom – Developer: Capcom

Rating: 8 out of 10

Devil May Cry fans seem to have a love/hate relationship with the series.

Obviously they keep buying because the fourth iteration is now on shelves, but some complain that one game is tortuously hard, another uninspired, secondary characters are not as cool as Dante, etc. And maybe they have a point.

The *DMC* series has struggled to find ways to evolve while staying true to the core of what made the original a hit. *Devil May Cry 4* continues to combine the Castlevania-esque worlds and adventure with its own combo system that is easy to learn, difficult to master, characters with cheesy rock star attitudes and a demonic sci-fi plot.

Dante and newcomer Nero both have swordplay and guns at their disposal, but aside from that, play entirely different. At first, Nero seems lame, but once the player gets used to his Devil Bringer arm, it is almost hard to switch to Dante. Again, once players get used to Dante, it's not fun going back. And Dante is still the biggest badass around. Nero comes off (maybe intentionally) as a dork in comparison.

The story is pretty good, but the gameplay is stellar. Still, the developer's decision to make players traverse the same world twice while fighting most of the game's bosses not once, not twice, but three times seems just a tad egomaniacal. The bosses are great fights, Capcom, but not that great. Even as a different character, they play mostly the same. Still, *DMC4* handles like a dream, the visuals are beautiful, sound is notably good, and the overall experience is fun. Unlockable difficulty levels offer masochistic gamers their challenge and upgradeable characters also extend the game's life. (WMJ)



Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword (DS) [T]

Publisher: Tecmo – **Developer:** Team Ninja

Rating: 8 out of 10

Grab your DS and sharpen the stylus. Team Ninja brings its famed series to Nintendo's hand-held with *Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword*, the most graphically-advanced game on the DS to date.

Dragon Sword is played by holding the DS like a book—map on the left screen, action on the touch screen. Buttons are only used for blocking so the DS can be held whatever way feels most comfortable.

Various movements with the stylus control movement and attacks. Team Ninja created the stylus version of a button masher; scribbling willy-nilly worked just fine for most of the game.

Ninja Gaiden's renowned brutally hard boss fights are absent from this edition, and bosses are disappointing this time around as most have the same patterns and moves. The story is little more than an excuse to have a ninja cutting things up in another *Ninja Gaiden*.

Still, *Dragon Sword* does a great job of capturing the *Ninja Gaiden* universe in a portable format. As a 4-hour diversion to hold gamers over until *Ninja Gaiden 2*'s release, this will do. (Kevin Haverly)

Condemned 2: Bloodshot (PS3, 360) [M]

Publisher: Sega – **Developer:** Monolith Productions

Rating: 9 out of 10

Condemned 2 is a game to buy for the single-player experience much more than the shoddy attempt at multiplayer, but for the former the game is definitely worth a second outing with Ethan Thomas fighting both his own demons and those roaming the streets.

Condemned 2 may not have the franchise name of horror mainstays such as

Resident Evil and *Silent Hill*, but offers one of the best horror experiences ever made. The game is designed to put the player on edge of a constant threat both in dark corridors and open areas. Part of its success in doing so comes from the decision to rarely pull the player from behind the eyes of Thomas in an amazing first-person presentation akin to that of *Call of Duty 4*.

Monolith provides an intriguing script, great characterization and wonderfully scary environments to brave through. The melee-centric combat is simple enough to pick up and play but complex enough to be inventive with combos, weapons and environmental kills. The lesser amount of gun-based combat also works well and the game's limiting of ammo makes every bullet count. Forensic investigations also add a nice change of pace to gameplay.

Condemned 2 doesn't have much of an online community and the combat, while great for single-player, doesn't translate well to a group setting. Still, the intense presentation, story, and gameplay make *Condemned 2* worth a trip into this chaotic, bloody world. (WMJ)

Lost Planet: Extreme Condition (PS3, 360, PC) [T]

Publisher: Capcom – **Developer:** Capcom

Rating: 7 out of 10

Lost Planet successfully combines third-person shooter and mech fighter in such a way that the game is fun and feels right whether on foot or commanding a vital suit, as they are called in the game. As Wayne Holden, the gamer battles space pirates and Akrid, the native life form of the ice-covered planet E.D.N. II.

The gameplay is excellent but doesn't evolve much. The premise of the game is also great. The human race decided to inhabit a wasteland of a planet thought to be uninhabitable only to be forced away by the Akrid. Humans, however, find a

powerful energy source inside the bodies of the Akrid and create vital suits to kill and harvest that energy. It's a great setup and rife with social commentary, but the writers muck things up with a convoluted plot, terrible dialogue and almost comical voice acting to execute it.

The game also throws a curveball at the end, essentially tossing everything the player has learned out the window and replacing it with an awkwardly controlled final boss fight. Still, the game's large world is interesting and varied, though very white. Gameplay visuals are solid and *Lost Planet* is filled with absolutely beautiful cut scenes. Multiplayer also provides solid third-person shooter action.

Everything feels the same after awhile, but the mech/shooter mashup is certainly fun, making *Lost Planet* worthwhile. (WMJ)

Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games (Wii) [E]

Publisher: Sega – **Developer:** Sega

Rating: 5 out of 10

Gamers planning on picking up this Olympic game better love shaking the hell out of controllers, because most of their time will be spent doing so. Like so many of Wii's party games, *Mario & Sonic* has resorted to a lot of frantic shaking when it comes to motion controls.

Seriously, various forms of running, swimming, jumping, and hammer throwing all require the player to furiously shake the Wii Remote and Nunchuck for extended periods of time. Archery and skeet shooting use the other wonderful function of the Wii Remote, aiming, while most everything else is filled in by timed button and motion prompts. Those are okay. The shaking—not so much.

Also like most party games, some of the mini-games are great, while it would be better if certain others did not exist. The Dream events, Olympic games modified with Nintendo and Sega twists, are actually the most interesting portion of the game and more attention to a wackier version of the Olympics might have benefited this game. And Sega's roster is noticeably weak next to that of Nintendo's.

In the scheme of Wii party titles, *Mario & Sonic* falls somewhere in the middle. Sega has tossed in trophies and emblems and other extras and records, so gamers can collect and achieve to their hearts' content. But the shaking, oh, the shaking will get painful, both figuratively and literally, by the end of these Summer Games. (WMJ)

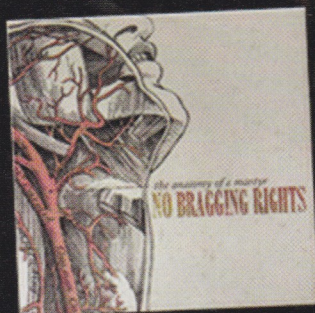
Games in upcoming issues of *AMP*, *Hails* and *ampmagazine.com*: *SMT: Persona 3 FES*, *Sega Superstars Tennis*, *House of the Dead 2 & 3 Return*, *MLB 2K8*, *Okami*, *GTA4*, *Dark Sector*, *Dream Pinball*, *Portal*, *Team Fortress 2* and more! ☛

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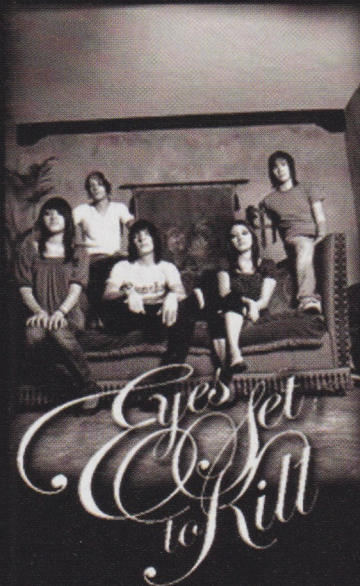


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Aug 2 2008 6:30P
KNITTING FACTORY - HOLLYWOOD, CA
Aug 4 2008 6:30P
TBA - SAN JOSE, CA
Aug 5 2008 6:30P
TBA - FRESNO, CA
Aug 6 2008 6:45P
SATYRICON - PORTLAND, OR
Aug 7 2008 6:30P
EL CORAZON - SEATTLE, WA
Aug 8 2008 6:30P
THE BLVD - SPOKANE, WA
Aug 21 008 6:30P
TBA - SAN DIEGO, CA
Aug 22 2008 7:00P
COBALT CAFE - CANOGA PARK, CA

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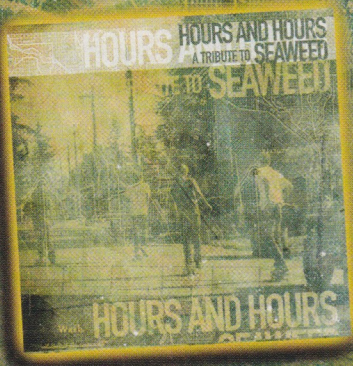
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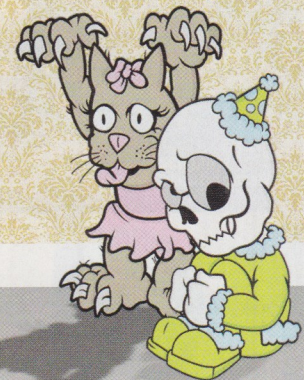
- ## HOURS AND HOURS
- A TRIBUTE TO SEAWEEED
- RYAN MILLS (of Kover)
 - FOUR STAR ALARM
 - THE COMPANY WE KEEP
(Brian Southall of The Receiving End of Sirens & Kenny Bridges of Moneen)
 - FAVEZ
 - STEVE BRODSKY (of Cave In)
 - NORA
 - ELEMAE
 - THE ACTION DESIGN
 - THE PORTER (members of Thursday, We.re All Broken & The Gaslight Anthem)
 - KILLWHITNEYDEAD.
 - LOOK WHAT I DID
 - THE FIRE STILL BURNS
 - THE STORY CHANGES
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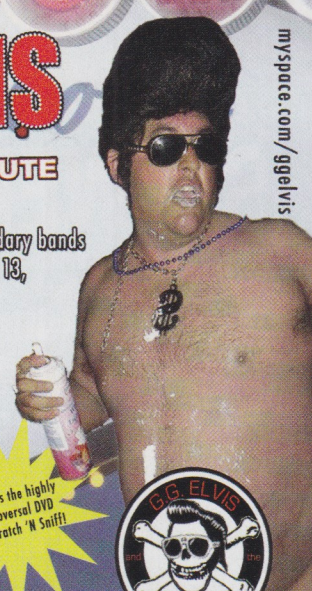
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VINYL FILE

LESS THAN JAKE

By Ben Conoley

Less Than Jake are presently readying the release of their eighth studio album, GNV FLA. The album, released on their own label, Sleep it Off Records, sees Less Than Jake returning to the sound that made them ska-punk favorites across the world. Horns, horns, horns. Did I mention there are horns?

Since their inception in 1992, Less Than Jake has released some of the most interesting and fun records in punk rock. After all, can you name any bands that have released records shaped like birthday cake and moldy cheese or have released records in pizza boxes (I know, I know, Horse!) and pie tins? This is all in addition to flexi discs, a split with Megadeth and much, much more. It would take much too long to cover every vinyl release the band has put out. Instead, Vinyl File is thrilled to present the Less Than Jake highlight reel.

Less Than Jake's 50th release was celebrated

with birthday cake shaped 7". There were 1,000 pressed on pink and white vinyl with 500 pressed on green and white vinyl, which was dubbed the "moldy" version. The record contained the songs 'This is the Modern World,' 'Son of Dick,' 'Laverne and Shirley' and 'Last Train.'

However, the birthday cake 7" isn't the only Less Than Jake album to be released on both "moldy" and regular versions. The same can be said for their Cheese 7". Released in 1998 and sold online and on the Ska Against Racism Tour, 1,000 were pressed on yellow triangle-shaped vinyl, complete with Swiss cheese holes. 500

"moldy" versions were also pressed on green vinyl with black streaks. The 7" had 'Cheese' on the a-side and a cover of Twisted Sister's 'We're not Gonna Take it' on the b-side.

People lucky enough to attend Less Than Jake's

1998 Halloween show at the Metro in Chicago were able to snag one of 2,800 Rock-n-Roll Pizzeria 7" records. Released through Fueled by Ramen,

these records were pressed, appropriately enough, on orange/black vinyl. People who grabbed their copy early in the evening were given copies with more black than orange, while the opposite can be said for those who grabbed a copy later on. The title track can be found on the b-side of this record, while the first side contains 'Son of Dick.'

These songs were also featured on No Idea Records' version of the 7". This time around both



songs were found on the first side with the second side featuring an etching done by Armadillo. However that's not the coolest part, all 1,000 copies came inside a hand screened Less Than Jake pizza box with a magnet, guest check, napkin and menu.

In 1998, Less Than Jake released *Hello Rockview* on a number of vinyl formats. This included a box set containing 7 7" records. Each record contained two songs from the album and was limited to 5,000 copies. The set was also packaged with a limited edition record adapter with the Less Than Jake logo. While this set was released through Capitol Records, Drive-Thru also released a picture disc version. This version had two pressings, each limited to 500.

Less Than Jake's 2003 effort, *Anthem*, also received the 7x7" treatment. However, this time each 7" was a picture disc featuring each song's artwork from the CD liner notes on its respective side. Only 500 were made, making this one of the band's more sought after full-length releases.

Less Than Jake contributed a cover of The Partridge Family's 'I Think I Love You' to the *Scream 2* motion picture soundtrack. Other notable acts to make an appearance include Master P, Kottonmouth Kings, Sugar Ray and Dave Matthews Band (OK, it also included Foo Fighters, Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds and Jon Spencer Blues Explosion). If you attended the band's tours around that time, you may have been lucky enough to catch one 5,000 promotion flexis containing the song that they passed out at shows.

The band released another flexi featuring the song 'Theme for Yo Yo Ninja.' Limited to only 1,000 copies, 800 were given out for free at SXSW with 200 sold on tour.

Megadeth may be one of the last band's one associates with Less Than Jake, but despite their seemingly polar opposite styles and outlooks on life, the two bands got together to record a split 7". This album isn't especially rare, as it had three pressings totaling over 5,000 copies, but it is one of their coolest records if only for novelty sake. Plus, it comes on a number of apocalyptic color ways.

One of the biggest coups for any Less Than Jake collector is the bands Pie Tin release. This release featured 7 7"s bundled together in, of course, a pie tin. The set contained, in addition to the records (Smoke Spot, Unglued, Pez Kings, Pung/LTJ split, Rock-n-Roll Pizzeria, Crash Course in Being an Asshole and Kemuria/LTJ split) a sticker, gum, smoker's club card and crash course tattoos. Only 175 of Pie Tins were assembled.

Of course, no Less Than Jake spotlight would be complete with a discussion with Vinnie Fiorello, the band's drummer, lyricist and resident vinyl nerd. Vinyl File sat down to talk with Vinnie about Less Than Jake's colorful vinyl history.

Did you have any interest in vinyl before starting Less Than Jake?

Oh yeah, my brother collected 7"s and 45s so it's funny. As I was growing up my brother was into punk. We were living in New Jersey at the time and he was kind of taking care of me because my mother and father were working nights. He

was in that scene, but after a while he drifted more into heavier music and metal, so I acquired his collection. So I had a bunch of Misfits and Damned 7"s that he gave to me as he moved onto other genres of music. So from that point on, that was what I listened to. I didn't know any better, it was the radio or listening to music on vinyl. There was no other way to listen to music in the house.

It's funny, it seems like a common theme, before

the Internet people got into punk rock through their older brothers

My older brother is four years older than me and he is responsible for getting me into the music I love. Over half my life has been spent in the punk community, it's weird.

How important was it to release your music on vinyl from the beginning with

Less Than Jake?

100%. The first thing we did as a band aside from cassette tapes that you gave out for free, the format was putting out a 7". That was, as a band when we first started, we sort of went, "we want to put out a vinyl 7". That's kind of trippy now when you think about it because people want to release CDs and then it moved to online and digital format. For

us, our biggest sort of goal was to have a 7" and we wanted it to be on No Idea because at the moment they were more of a magazine than a record label, we were fans of the magazine so we wanted it to come out on No Idea. We said we'd pay for it, do the art work, hand screen the covers. Var said, "Oh yeah cool," but it's something we really wanted. We wanted to have a 7" and for it to come out on No Idea.

And of course you continued to work with them, and a bunch of other small labels throughout your career.

For us, we just wanted to work with as many labels as possible. I think I tallied it somewhere and it was 20 different labels or something like that. We just wanted to put out the music and whoever wanted to put out the records, that's where it floated to. We had records on Far Out records, World Records, What Else, Snuffy Smile, No Idea, Asian Man. It's kind of a crazy thing, some labels, let's say Far Out Records who put out the first

Against All Authority record and who put out our *Making Fun of Things You Don't Understand 10"*, the Crumbs Records, those were great records and big bands at the time. Against All Authority, when *Destroy What Destroys You* came out was massive. That label isn't around anymore.

As someone who collects records yourself, how do you feel looking back over your catalog and having all these random records all over the place that are so tough to find?

Early on there was a comp called *Make the Collector Nerd Sweat*. That's been our mantra as a band as far as our vinyl output but also as toys and other rare things. We wanted to do cool projects weather it be records, toys, hand screened tours. We just wanted to do that because it is the culture around our band, we do it in our own right. I collect records and toys and put out collectible toys.

I was talking to Var from No Idea Records and one of the things he said about releasing so many colors of their records was that it simply keeps things interesting for them.

When you're doing it, it's not what other people are going to think, you're just doing it because it's fun. A die-cut cheese record, you're not thinking people are going to go crazy, I am just thinking, "we have a fucking piece of cheese for a record." It's fun for us and for people who like our band.

Is that why you have released your own vinyl for a little while now?

We've had a few things with different labels, in the UK we worked with Warner UK and they did a lot of vinyl pieces for some reason. Var did a lot of represses of old records and I have been handling the duties putting out Less Than Jake stuff

here. Regardless of how convenient it is to go to my computer and download Crimpshrine, you can find those records, that's great. But when you do vinyl and you have that physical aspect, the reason why you are doing it, it's art, it's more than the music, it's this other thing that's attached to it. You want something physical besides the song, that's the cool thing about doing vinyl. It might not be as convenient, but it's something that you have forever. You are holding a die cut record in your hand unlike something you've ever seen before. Then you put it on and it's got great songs as well.

I wanted to ask you about a number of your records specifically. Let's start off with the Megadeth split.

We had been on Capitol Records for *Losing Streak* and *Hello Rockview*. Megadeth had been on Capitol around the same time we were and one of the people that work at Capitol knew we were metal-heads. They knew we did the Slayer thing before. They said, "Dave Mustaine really likes your band." We said, "Can you get in touch with Dave about doing a song?" They had a new record coming out and we were offering to pay for the whole thing. A mutual friend at Capitol that also knew Megadeth, it was a simple and painless process. We had 'All Our Best Friends are Metal Heads' on the a-side and they had 'Disinte-



grator' on the b-side. We had green vinyl and the four flaps that fit together for the European version and the Pentagonagram cover in the US.

Speaking of Slayer, how did that 7" come about?

The Slayer one, we did two covers of Slayer songs. As a fluke when we did the *Grease* soundtrack we learned two Slayer covers and never thought of doing anything with it, and then Var listened to it and said, "We should do those songs." If you listen to those covers, it's a bit of a reach for the band, a departure, but at that time we were doing a lot of covers. We were doing '80s pop covers like Twisted Sister, so it wasn't foreign to us. I am a massive Slayer fan, so being able to go in there and cover those songs and put your own twist on it was cool.

Do you know if they ever got back to Slayer?

Have they heard it? We played the Eagles Ballroom in Milwaukee and Machine Head was playing upstairs. Their crew head worked with Slayer and we gave them a bunch of Less Than Jake Slayer shirts and vinyl, so I am sure they heard it.

How about the food related records such as the Cheese and Cake ones?

The Cheese ones came from our friend Cheese who was in Pittsburgh. We did an early version of the song that ended up on *Hello Rockview*. We had a few songs such as 'Scott Farcas Takes it on the Chin' and 'Cheese' was another one, so we decided to do the cheese shape in honor of our friend Cheese. I called up Erika Records and talked to Liz and said, "I want to do this record and I want it to be a cheese block and have holes drilled in it." She laughed and came back and said, "I can drill this many holes in it and have it this shape and you can have these many songs." I said, "That's great, I'm stoked."

The Cake record was a celebration for us, it was our 50th release, so I just put some songs that were hard to get at that moment. We had some out of print records that I just let get farmed out.

Continuing on with the food theme, what about the cereal box set?

It was a blast. It was represses of our first 7"s. *Unglued*, *Pez Kings*, *Pung spit*, *Rock-n-Roll Pizzeria*, *Crash Course in Being an Asshole* and the *Kemuri split*. We packaged those with a t-shirt and I did these small little skull toys and we did some of these gold toys and if

kids got those they were guest listed for life. There is one guy, I don't have his name in front of me but he still emails me and I put him on the guest list. He has used it four times. He had sold that toy to a collector of Funcom, the company I had the toys made through, for an obscene amount of money, something like \$600. The cereal box is the highest priced thing I have seen as far

as Ebay - that, the toy and everything wound up being something ridiculous like \$630. One toy that we did that we were giving away to people with Less Than Jake tattoos, it went for \$800. The pie tin had the

same records.

And the final food record, the Rock-n-Roll Pizzeria.

That was really cool, we screened the pizza boxes in our apartment and put it together with a magnet and a guest check, and we went through with the whole thing. We were nerdy and meticulous with the things that were in there. On the b-side was an etching from Armadillo. We also did the *Rock-n-Roll Pizzeria* on a repress from Snuffy Smile in Japan, but that



ing ourselves entertained. We just thought, "Wouldn't it be cool to put it in a pizza box?" and before you know it after a bunch of coffee and a lot of missed sleep we called this pizza place and got these boxes and another place told us where to get cheap magnets. You just go with it, it's a project.

You also did a few flexi-discs, which you almost never see anymore.

We did three. One was with Boris the Sprinkler, on was 'I think I Love You' for the *Scream* soundtrack and another one after that that just had some live songs on it. We did 'I think I Love You' with Capitol Records because the soundtrack came out on that label and we said we wanted to do some weird promo. They said, "Do you want to make stickers?" We said, "No, we want to do some flexies. They only cost 30 cents a piece," and they said, "Do it." So

we made an insane amount of records just threw them out. They don't make them anymore. The company that made them stopped making them, I don't know why. I called them five years ago to make clear flexi and they were like, "We don't do that anymore." I tried to pry, but they

weren't having any of my nonsense. Before they stopped making flex-

ies they turned into a weird religious company and they went through your music and if you had any swearing they wouldn't do it, but "I think I Love You" was a Partridge Family song, so it was ok. I think we were one of the last people to do a record with them.

Lately you have released your albums as a series of 7" records, is that something you're going to continue to do?

In the future, I don't know if we'll do it. The *Anthem* set was really cool, I was stoked on that. We did the *In With the*

Out Crowd vinyl ourselves, but I don't know if we'll do it again. But I definitely plan on doing an interesting thing for the new record that I don't want to say, but it will be like two records in one. But instead of packaging, it will be based on the audio side of things. Stay tuned for that. I have heard of people doing it once or twice, but I have never heard one. Consider this, even when we were on Warner and Capitol it's not like they were interested in vinyl anyways, especially from Less Than Jake, so it was really easy to do it ourselves or have someone else. But for us to do stuff ourselves now with *Sleep It Off*, expect more collectibles. When we want to record songs we don't have to worry about anything else. We don't have to worry about clearing songs and the red tape involved.

It must be a relief to be at a point where you can do this now and not have to worry about label support.


It really is. After a certain point on our last record it was really evident that it was time for us to do it ourselves and just step away from Warner Bros. Luckily Warner was cool enough to say "OK, we're going to part ways". That gave us the opportunity to start sleep it off and redo.

Are you going to be re-releasing any of your back catalogue now?

I don't think I'm going to reprint anything, but I am going to do anything that Less Than Jake does from now on. I have toyed with the idea of just doing a live record that is just on vinyl. I had a hair-brained scheme of doing every LP that we have ever done in one box and the extra record would be a live record that you can only get with this.

But thought of doing 9 or 10 12" and boxing them, and then, is someone going to pay \$135 for a set? That's nuts, I don't know. I would like to do it, but if you do it and it doesn't go anywhere you are in the hole a lot of money. But it's on one of those drawing boards.

Did you manage to keep one of everything that you have released over the years?

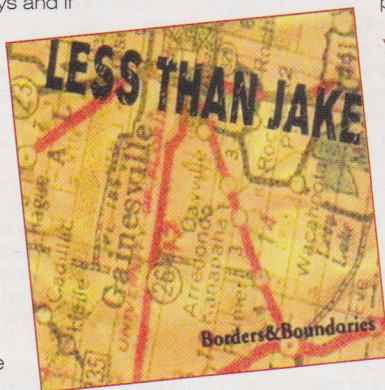
I kept two or three extra copies because inevitably there is someone writing a letter saying "My house burned down and this record was in it, can you send it to me?" That happened with the *Muppets 7"*, this girl emailed me and said, "My house burned down, and do you have any extras? It was my favorite record." So I went into my collection and pulled it out, and that happens all the time. But right now I still have like two copies and test presses for every record that we've done. 



didn't have the box, just a sleeve.

What I have a hard time understanding is just how something like that comes to fruition?

It's weird, you have this song, you're looking at it, and looking around for a unique way to release it. We weren't going out of our way to make it unique, but it was a way of keep-



VINYL NEWS

No Idea Records (www.noidearecords.com) has some exciting things going on. They just launched pre-orders for their re-issues of Lifetime's 2007 self-titled album. They've also got their first pressing of **HOT WATER MUSIC's** 1997 Doghouse Records album *Forever and Counting*.

SIGUR RÓS is following up their recent box-set with a new album. You can pre-order it from Beggars Group.

Chuck Ragan is continuing his prolific solo career with a new split 7". He's joined this time around by **Nagel** for the release, which will be out in the United States via Chuck Ragan's online store. The color variations have not been confirmed yet, but it is on clear vinyl if nothing else. Chuck also recently released a full-length collaboration with **Austin Lucas**, which has been available in Europe and should be on our shores shortly. Tour versions are floating around eBay and European distro sites.

Team Science Records (www.teamsciencerecords.com) are preparing for what promises to be in the very least, a busy and productive summer. They have a number of projects in the works including a 10" from Matt and Kim's "To/From" 10"/Ep from **Matt & Kim**. *To/From* will feature five tracks previously only available on CD. The record will be limited to 1000 all with hand-screened covers. Also coming from Team Science is **The Swellers'** 2007 album *My Everest*. Finally, also keep your eyes open for releases from **Teenage Kicks**, **Golden Axe** and **Lisa's Sons**.

Gaslight Anthem are releasing a teaser 7" in anticipation of their upcoming second album *The '59 Sound*. The 7" features the title-track of the new album as well as 'Even Cowgirls Get the Blues,' which will also appear on the LP. It was released on both gold and black, but the gold sold out in a matter of hours. You can still purchase the black version from Side One Dummy (www.sideonedummy.com). Also, keep your eyes open for a 10" European version of *Señor and the Queen*, a clear repress of Sabot's 2x7" version of the same, and a white pressing of *Sink or Swim* from Gunner Records in Europe.

A third pressing of **TORCHE's** 2007 album *In Return* has been made. The 10" is now available (with a CD) on red/blue (400), mint swirl (400), creamsicle (400), wine (400), orchid (200) and flower petals (200). What? You don't think "flower petals" is a color? Think again.

Pre-orders for the **Blueline Medic 7" The Middle Of The End** are being taken now in the Hobbledehoy e-store. Order and receive a free poster and sticker while supplies last. The record is planned to ship out late June and comes with a digital download code. It is available on either black or strictly limited white vinyl.

THE MARS VOLTA's new album *The Bedlam in Goliath* will be out on vinyl shortly. The album is going to be on two records, each half black and half red with an etching on the b-side. What's that? Not excessive enough? Well, they are also throwing in a custom shaped picture 7". Yeah.

A-F Records is now selling

the double-LP version of **ANTI-FLAG's** latest release, *The Bright Lights of America*. Here's the pressing info: First pressing: 3,000 copies worldwide - 50 with Side A/B on white/tan/black/silver splatter vinyl, 100 with Side A/B on semi-transparent white/black/silver vinyl, 150 with Side A/B on tan & black vinyl. Remaining copies - Side A/B/C/D on black vinyl. All copies come with laser etching on Side D. So that leaves three sides of music, with a laser etching of the eagle man from the cover on the fourth side. There are two bonus tracks available on the LP: 'Wake Up The Town' and 'I'm So Sick of You'. All copies include an exclusive double-sided poster/lyric insert.

Chemikal Underground Records have released a 4 LP set of **MOGWAI's** *Young Team*. The band's first album is now available in a deluxe edition. You get a free MP3 download of the album when you order, which is only fair since it will cost you an arm and a leg to acquire. More info on the release can be found at www.shop.chemikal.co.uk.

Triumph of Life Records (www.tolrecords.com) is now taking pre-orders for their split 7" between **O PIONEERS!!** and **THE ANCHOR**. The record, which has been in the works for over a year is finally done and can be purchased from the label's website.

Six Feet Under Records is now taking orders for the new **DOWN TO NOTHING 7"**. *Hem Hem* is being limited to 220 copies and the label has imposed a one-per person limit on the record. Six Feet Under is also releasing a limited version of **MENTAL's** *Demo II 7"* which only features 7 of the 8 songs meant to be included on the album. Only 200 exist.

Right to Assemble Records has released their second *Right to Assemble* compilation. This new volume is pressed on 500 copies of clear vinyl and features unreleased songs from THE ERGS, ENSIGN, DEAD TIRED, FIRE STILL BURNS and more. To order, check the website.

Interpunk (www.interpunk.com) is now taking pre-orders for **LESS THAN JAKE's** upcoming eighth album *GNV FLA*. You can get this with a bonus 7", on its own, or with a signed bonus 7". The possibilities are really, quite endless.

Pre-orders should be launching soon for Broken Circles' (www.brokencircles.com) pressing of **FURTHER SEEMS FOREVER's** 2003 album *How To Start A Fire*. Six different colors should be available and 25 orders will receive limited silk-screen posters along with their records. Sign up for Broken Circles' email list to be notified when they go on sale.

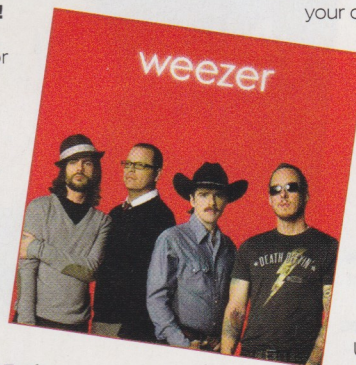
LAGRECIA's long-awaited full-length has finally been announced. *On Parallels* will be released through Vinyl Collective (www.vinylcollective.com) on both black (300) and metallic silver/grey (700) vinyl. Single copies of the black version are sold out, but you can still buy a few of the package deals that come with both colors as well as a CD, pint glass, poster, t-shirt and more.

In other Vinyl Collective/Suburban Home news, the label is preparing for the release of **GHOST BUFFALO's** sophomore effort, *The Magician*. The album is being pressed on both tan/brown half and half with red splatter (200) and red with gold splatter (300). People who pre-order it will be entered into a contest to win a test press.

Suicide Squeeze (www.suicidesqueeze.net) is now taking pre-orders for **MINUS THE BEAR's** *They Make Beer Commercials Like This*. The 12" will be released on rainbow, grey and magenta and a surprise color exclusive to Vinyl Collective.

Long Island's **CAPITAL's** 2007 album *Homefront* is set to be released by Underground Communiqué (www.undercomm.org). You can pre-order it on blue or gold vinyl from the website.

Team Science Records has a new 7" from **GHOST TOWN TRIO** available for pre-order. The record will be on both black and colored vinyl. Each copy will come with a free CD of the 7", which promises to make listening to the album in your car that much easier.



WEEZER's new *Red* album is available for pre-order over at InSound (www.in-sound.com). For a limited time, the album, which is on red vinyl, will come with a free 7" featuring 'Pork & Beans.'

While available for some time in the States, **BOMB THE MUSIC INDUSTRY's** 2006 album *Goodbye Cool World!* has been released on vinyl in the UK. Fans from overseas or completists on this side of the pond can order green copies of

the record through Homesick Records, who has released the pressing in conjunction with Asbestos Records.

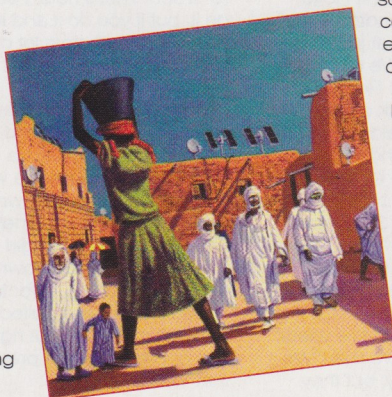
Deathwish Inc launched pre-order for new records from **KILLING THE DREAM** who will be releasing their new LP *Fractures* and **CARRIER** who are preparing to release their new 7" *No Love Can Save Me*. Both albums can be ordered through the Deathwish store.

KARMA ELEKTRA are pre-selling their upcoming *Six Songs 7"*. The album will be available on black (200), white (100) and green (100) vinyl. All copies are hand-numbered and come with a 6x6" booklet.

Jumpstart Records (www.jumpstartrecords.com) have begun taking pre-orders for **A WILLHELM SCREAM's** 2007 album *Career Suicide*. The record will officially be out on July 29.

Fans of **NADA SURF** can throw their hands up and say "yay." Barsuk Records has announced that they will be releasing a vinyl box set of all the band's studio albums this summer. In other label news, they will be releasing **MATES OF STATE's** *Re-Arrange Us* on vinyl. Finally, the label has also released the soundtrack for *Kurt Cobain About A Son*.

Important Records (www.importantrecords.com) is selling 1,000 copies of **GRAILS'** new album *Take Refuge in Clean Living*. The first 100 orders will receive a purple record while the remaining 900 will get a black record. Don't worry, they contain the same songs. 





KELSEY AND THE CHAOS!

By Daniela Hosier (Heart Throb Media) / Photos Courtesy of Kelsey and the Chaos!

RECORD LABELS PAY ATTENTION! Multiple dates on the Vans Warped Tour, an appearance on Fearless TV, tour dates with Brett Michaels, new CD this July produced by platinum sensation Kenny Gioia. All this after only three months!!! Labels start your engines!

Contact: Zach 'Neil'

Email: Management@eastcoastindependent.com

Website: www.eastcoastindependent.com

How long have you guys been a band...

We have had our current line up since April 2008; So technically, only a couple of months!

Do you have any touring plans for the summer...

This summer you can catch us playing the East Coast Indie/Playwork

Stage on this year's Warped Tour. We are also very excited about playing with Bret Michaels on his "Rock of Love" tour as well as with Sound The Alarm, Roark, Driving East and Patent Pending. We plan to tour throughout the summer and we will keep our myspace page updated with any new dates, www.myspace.com/kelseyandthechaos

What can fans expect from your upcoming release "Against the Wall"...

Fans can expect to see a lot of different styles we have been experimenting with. Some songs show a straight up rock vibe, while others will have people dancing uncontrollably. We will follow up our EP "Against the Wall" with a full length album sometime in 2009.

Where do you see the band in two years...

In two years, we still want to be spilling our guts on stage for masses of adoring fans, and making records people want to buy and sing along to.

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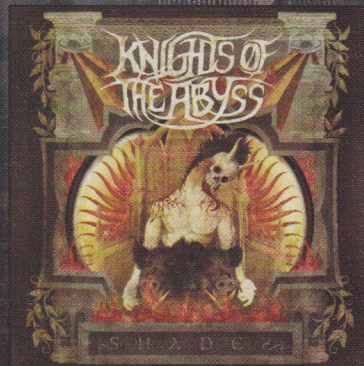
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REVIEWERS: (RK) RAMSEY KANAAN, (STM) SAMMY THE MICK, (JC) JIMI CHEETAH, (RVH) RAY VAN HORN JR, (TS) TRISTAN STADDON, (MWB) MATT "WINDBREAKER" COTE, (MR) MIKE RODRIGUEZ, (NN) NICK NORTON, (WMJ) WILLIAM JONES, (JBM) JOHN MOORE, (JCC) JEN CONRAD, (JK) JIM KAZ, JOHN JOH (JJ)

4 FT. FINGERS

New Beginnings of Old Stories CD

Awful band name and an album cover that appears like a knock-off of LARS FREDRIKSEN & THE BASTARDS...but hold on... the music contained therein is actually pretty good if a bit manufactured sounding. Hailing from Cheltenham 4 FT. FINGERS play an extremely poppy brand of "street-ish" punk. All the instruments are played with very solid technique and they come through clearly in the mix. At times the singer reminds me of a milder Olaf from Germany's STAGE BOTTLES. My favorite song was 'Save Your Soul Tonight' with its very catchy chorus that sounded a bit like a little MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE mixed with a little MEN AT WORK but played by fans of punk (I know, it sounds terrible, but isn't). There is one horribly anomalous track that sounded like the bastard child of THE TOSSERS and DEXY'S MIDNIGHT RUNNERS. My only other complaint is that the album might be a bit over-produced with too much polish and too little bite. Judge for yourself. (RK)

(Not On Your Radio Records/www.notonyourradio.com)

A THOUSAND TIMES REPENT

Virtue Has Few Friends CD EP

Six songs of inspired new/nu metal/metalcore from this band out of Atlanta. I say "nu metal" because often times the riffs, rather than being built of chugging power chords, are based upon repeated fretboard hammer-on/pull-off sequences. Lots of dissonant intervals used to fill the space (similar to NORMA JEAN) in and around complex rhythms. Scream-y vocals that get a bit emo at times with a couple songs having slower quiet melodic breaks (one reminded me of OPETH, the other was more like MUSE or someone). It looks like the band has three guitarists and they put them to good use with some intricate lines and nice arpeggios. Solid rhythm section with strong drumming. The final track is a ballad which kinda reminded me of something MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE might do. This band would fit in well on the Facedown label. (RK)

(Tribunal Records/www.tribunalrecords.net)

BALLPOINT

Get Loose CD

A disc chock-full of up-tempo melodic punk courtesy of this Tasmanian band. Lots of Fat Wreck Chords influences here. A little NOFX, early PROPAGANDHI and their fellow Land-Down-Under-ers FRENZAL RHOMB, plus sometimes a sound somewhere along the lines of JIMMY EAT WORLD. The band is really tight and most of the songs are pretty catchy. BALLPOINT's songs range from the light-hearted ('Beer Song' and 'Dirty Mrs. Johnson') to more serious subjects like the war in Iraq ('Juba') and racist nationalism in 'Riots and Wrongs'. An all around quality release. (RK)

(Disconnect Records/www.disconnectrecords.com)

THE BANGKOK FIVE

We Love What Kills Us CD

We Love What Kills Us is a spotted effort, though interesting. On 'Straight Fell Off', Frost delivers smooth vocals reminiscent of THE LIVING END's Chris Cheney, while on the title track, he goes from horror rock to screamo rock n' roll within 20 seconds and it just doesn't

click. There is a constant rush of style on the EP, but the lyrics seem more flash than substance, and the tracks lack an overall feeling of cohesion. A lot of variation is present, but that just makes it feel more like a band unsure of itself. THE BANGKOK FIVE tries to please too many crowds while remaining hipsters through and through, and the sophomore effort fails as a result. (WMJ)

(Long Live Crime Records/www.longlivecrimerecords.com)

BLASÉ DEBRIS

Morfiend CD

Their first album Creep Cool may have been a favorite among the horror punk crowd, but with their follow-up Morfiend BLASÉ DEBRIS have gotten leaner and meaner. The guitar is front and center, sounding like some unholy alliance between MOTÖRHEAD and THE DAMNED, and the track 'Flat Black Sunshine' could easily be mistaken for a long lost WHITE ZOMBIE song. Still, devil locked fiends have little to fear besides themselves in the mirror, since BLASÉ still deliver the horror punk goods on furious cuts like 'Vampira Sirens' and 'From Dusk Til Dawn'. Catch them this summer on the Warped Tour, where they'll attempt to make every day Halloween (in the sunlight no less!). (Danielle Torrence)

(Altercation Records/www.altercationrecords.com)

CALIFORNIA LOVE

Reaping the Whirlwind CD

Pissed off metallic grindcore (is there even such a thing as "happy grindcore"?). On this here self-released CD. Hailing from Oakland, CALIFORNIA LOVE features Brian from LOOK BACK AND LAUGH and DEAD AND GONE on guitar (not bass this time). Ten songs of disgruntled misanthropy with a sound in the vein of NAPALM DEATH, ASSUCK, etc. You know, "Grindcore" with a little bit more riff-based songs and a metallic edge. I think Chris Dodge from Slap-A-Ham Records would love these guys. (RK)

(self-released CD/
www.myspace.com/cantwastedeath)

CONFEDERACY OF

HORSEPOWER

Vagabond Cabaret CD

First off, not a fan of the look. The cover is just a shot of the dudes, and they look pretty awful. One dude looks all pop punk, one looks all MARILYN MANSON, one looks like he's from MÖTLEY CRÜE, and yet another looks like he's a huge fan of GOOD CHARLOTTE. Basically, I'm just sick of the bullshit fashion crap taking more attention than the music. Now, on to the music - it ain't bad. It's a lot better than I had expected, judging by the cover. Dirty, gritty, scummy punk rock and roll at its best. If you're into MOTÖRHEAD, GUNS N' ROSES, TURBONEGRO, and the rest of that kinda stuff, this is right up your alley. This shit's so dirty you might need to shower after. It's that nasty. (MWB)

(www.myspace.com/blastzoneentgroup)

CITY AND COLOUR

Bring Me Your Love CD

CITY AND COLOUR is ALEXISONFIRE's singer Dallas Green's solo side project; just Green and his guitar. His voice is near flawless, sure to impress any listener upon the first few seconds of hearing it. There is a slight subtlety in Green's voice that seems to make it allergic to annoyance, and above all, packed with honesty. He seems extremely trapped and without answers. In the track 'Constant Knot', Green sings on how he wishes he "could just disappear and run away from all of [his] fears." The want to abandon everything is not the only self-deprecating constraint that grips Green. Alas, it appears that Green's main enigma is sleep. He passionately sings about how he can't help but lie awake at night; a reoccurring theme on the album that truly captures the alienation that Green is dealing with during the entire album. Green spends the majority of the album with an existential outlook on life, declaring that "we're all just waiting to die" on the track 'Waiting...'. Bring Me Your Love is an elegant, brutally honest depiction of an alienated artist on a soap box reminding us that we are not alone in our feelings of alienation. (A. Scozia)

(Vagrant Records/www.vagrant.com)

THE CUTE LEPERS

Can't Stand Modern Music CD

Fucking great album title and a great album to go with that title! Started as a side project by Steve E. Nix from THE BRIEFS, THE CUTE LEPERS scored big by getting this released on the top-notch Blackheart Records label run by Joan Jett and Kenny Laguna. The disc sounds great. The band definitely has that bouncy, poppy British style similar to THE REZILLOS, BUZZCOCKS, BOYS (or for a more current point of reference think THE EXPLODING HEARTS, BRIEFS, FM KNIVES). Crisp, tight playing, strong vocals, and a snappy production help these catchy 2 1/2 minute gems jump to life. Stylistically there are a few interesting things mixed in (some slower songs, slide guitar on one track, etc.) while still maintaining an overall coherent feel to the album. There is only one song that doesn't work for me on this disc, but the brilliance of 'Cool

City', 'Modern Pests' and the rest make it a minor aberration that is quickly forgotten in this ace of an album. Highly recommended. (RK)

(Blackheart Records/www.blackheart.com)

DESTROY EVERYTHING

Freedom of Speech Means Talk is Cheap CD

When this album started off it had me singing along to its' great opener 'True Believer' within a minute. This Chicago area band has a really good 77 style punk meets NOFX sound - catchy hooks that pull you in but still snotty enough to keep things rough. The vocals remind me a bit of Joey Vindictive meets THE SIGN OFFS. Intelligent, often witty, well-written lyrics make



the good songs even better. Check out 'The Kids Are All Liars' and 'Alter or Abolish' for an example. Nice artwork on the packaging appropriating symbols from U.S. currency and taking the piss out of these "Great Seals". Though the album fades a bit here and there it is quite impressive overall. Nice work. (RK) (Tent City Records/www.tentcityrecords.com)

DETROIT COBRAS

Tied & True CD

I rather liked earlier recordings of THE DETROIT COBRAS so I was looking forward to reviewing this CD. I hadn't heard anything from them since their 2001 release *Life Love and Leaving on SETRI*. This release still has plenty of obscure rock and soul covers but they seem much more placid (flaccid?). Rachel Nagy's voice still sounds sweet although a very clean and smooth production has left the band without any of the real grit that I previously enjoyed.

There are some decent songs on here but many sound as if they were being performed by Bonnie Raitt or someone. Not bad, but way too middle-aged or FM radio for me. (RK) (Bloodshot Records www.bloodshotrecords.com)

THE DEVILLES

N.Y. Rock and Roll CD

New York has a storied history of churning out stellar punk bands and THE DEVILLES are no exception. On their debut, NY Rock and Roll, the Long Island foursome play solid punk rock in the vein of SOCIAL DISTORTION and THE DEAD BOYS. The eight song EP starts off strong with 'Coulda' Been My Baby' and doesn't let up. Jarett Bollerman's scratchy vocals complement the band's sound perfectly. With a subtle nod to rockabilly and the occasional blues riff thrown in, THE DEVILLES are proof that NY has not lost its touch for launching great bands. Though not

known by many outside their turf yet, the group is a full length record away from launching a brilliant career. (JBM) (www.thedevillesrnr.com)

DR MANHATTAN

Dr Manhattan CD

DR MANHATTAN made the first right step by choosing a band name, which, despite the band's many fictional stories, can be traced back to the blue Dr. Jonathan Osterman in Alan Moore's stellar graphic novel, *Watchmen*, which is the epitome of its medium. Whether the reference was intentional or not makes no difference. Comparisons to the doctor's unfathomably unlimited powers are a great fit for this band's eclectic sound. For all intents and purposes, this project should be a massive failure. It is modern, experimental, artsy, and these kids are too damn young. But a tongue-and-cheek approach combined with true

RELEASE SPOTLIGHT:

INSIDE THE SMITHS DVD

MVD Visual

The Academy smartly bestows an Oscar to supporting cast nominees because sometimes the towering leads—or at least their pedigree and reputations—supersedes subtle and intrinsically great performances that are unfortunately overshadowed or lost in translation. The aura and mysticism of THE SMITHS is so enormous they've sometimes been placed ahead of THE BEATLES in terms of their mass musical influence. Certainly their eclectic and expressionistic post-punk tunes have enjoyed worldwide favor when those who originally supported them in the legendary Manchester alternative clique rue the day 'How Soon Is Now?' became a crossover hit that even the metal and hip hop communities are seen bobbing heads to.

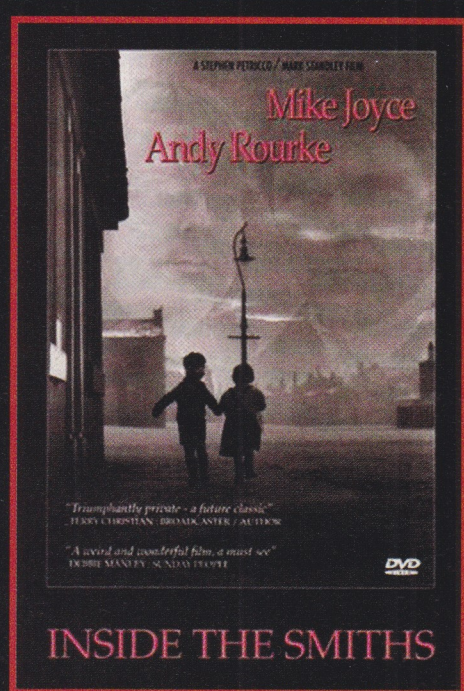
The thing with THE SMITHS is that they carried an unfortunate stigma of self-deprecation and internal loathing because of the endearing mopey genius of Morrissey, who found favor amongst a generation of disaffected Goth youth well before the rest of the world was turned on. It's no wonder Morrissey cheekily crooned "I'd like to drop my trousers to the world" on 'Nowhere Fast' from THE SMITHS' critical album *Meat Is Murder*. Between the enigmatic poetic aloofness of Morrissey and the radiant sequestered tapestries guitarist Johnny Marr pulled from his six strings, the other two components of THE SMITHS, bassist Andy Rourke and drummer Mike Joyce have been largely left out of the limelight—unless you count the reports of Rourke's drug bust in the late eighties that nearly had him ex-communicated from the band. Still, when you're inadvertently competing against alternative rock's answer to straight edge and an internally focused guitarist who some feel is better than The Edge and Daniel Ash combined, your role gets downplayed, much less the story you have to tell from a band universally heralded as one of the greats.

Inside The Smiths is the story of Mike Joyce and Andy Rourke and honestly, not that we all wouldn't relish the opportunity to hear Morrissey and Marr's perspectives (particularly in the same room as their ostracized former bandmates), but the honesty that exudes

without the cumbersome glare of the spotlight Morrissey especially brings is what we're really after here. Joyce and Rourke bring to the table a humanistic view to a band looked upon as larger than life in many circles and one whose internal affinity has been decimated to two friendships left with Mike Joyce caught in an unfortunate, drawn-out legal battle against his one-time musical brothers for back royalties.

Rourke, NEW ORDER's Peter Hook (who makes an appearance on the documentary) and THE CURE's Simon Gallup are probably alt rock's three greatest bassists, while Joyce had the unenviable task of modifying his punk-based drumming roots into scaled tempo selections to conform to not only Marr's lines, but also Joyce's, which frequently acted independently as much as they did congruently. *Inside The Smiths* brings us closer into the lives and roles of Joyce and Rourke, and as Joyce states in a bonus feature loose form interview, he and Rourke were there to witness the assemblage and dismantling of THE SMITHS and that they have as much validation to tell the band's story as anyone. This documentary is tightly-run and pared down to below an hour, considering Rourke and Joyce were at it for a couple of years putting this project together.

Without wholly slugging their bandmates, Rourke and Joyce offer their viewpoints of Morrissey and Marr with as much reverence and awe as random disappointment that a band producing monarch rock albums of their time such as *Louder Than Bombs*, *Strangeways Here We Come*, *The Queen Is Dead* and *Meat Is Murder* had nothing left to give one another. Morrissey is portrayed as a recluse and sometimes snobbish (there's a shocking story relayed about Morrissey's refusal to eat at the same table as studio producers and Johnny Marr's would-be replacement), but he's also given his full credit. Rourke and Joyce parlay their views in a sometimes lighthearted candor, also bringing in outside referrals from members of THE BUZZCOCKS and THE FALL as well as new leaguers such as KAISER CHIEFS and FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND. As Rourke recounts his momentary brush with drug abuse, you cheer for him as he gets his act together and



then sigh heavily once you realize there were only a couple more years left to THE SMITHS, which both Rourke and Joyce recall as "brilliant."

Inside The Smiths is a straightforward, sincere account that drops a few laughs along the way (particularly in the bonus features) to keep their documentary from getting too intense or outright blubbery. There is no woe is me to these guys; they appear humbled and proud of their roles in the band, but when you look outside of this DVD and the utterly sad mistreatment the four members of THE SMITHS have been slinging at each other like stocks and bombs, then all of this bullshit quibbling between themselves taints the legacy of a great band that was halted ahead of its time. Even sadder is the fact Mike Joyce reveals on this DVD that he has an entire box of lost tapes of THE SMITHS that might or might not ever see the day of light, barring an act of Parliament. THE BEATLES breaking up made sense because their work together had come to a rational close. THE SMITHS, however, that's a different story that could've finished on a nicer note...

talent makes this a hit against all odds. Matt Engers does a great job on vocals, but it's the instrumentation of DR MANHATTAN that truly shines. This band will make listeners realize just how many bands neglect how powerful dynamics can be (just listen to 'Pepper'). And the rolling keyboard phrasings of Andrew Morrison can't be ignored. The cover is easily distinguishable and the liner notes are creative. There is not one aspect of what it means to create an original album that this band seems to have overlooked. DR MANHATTAN's debut is a great one. (WMJ)
(Vagrant Records/www.vagrant.com)

DROPKICK MURPHYS

The Meanest of Times Deluxe CD/DVD

I'll be damned if this dark green and silver-lined packaging isn't some of the sexiest I've seen in a long time. And I'll be damned if the DROPKICK MURPHYS latest full-length, *The Meanest of Times*, isn't the best album the band has released in years. The video tracks, 'Flannigan's Ball' and 'The State of Massachusetts', are both memorable and well written/performed tracks. But the same goes for a number of others.

'Shattered' is a rolling, in-your-face pit starting masterpiece while 'Johnny I Hardly Knew Ya' is an unforgettable march. Sure, a couple duds reside here and there, but for fifteen original tracks, that's not bad. The deluxe edition includes five more cuts, one of which is a cover of THIN LIZZY's 'Jailbreak', which succeeds in paying tribute to the original while adding a DROPKICK spin. The DVD is kind of lame in comparison to the album, so this remains more for those that didn't pick up the first pressing, but the album is more than worth it. (WMJ)
(Born and Bred Records/www.dropkickmurphys.com)



EDISON GLASS

Time is Fiction CD

EDISON GLASS' name represents "the hypothetical collaboration of Thomas Alva Edison and Philip Glass." So, imagine the merger between an inventor with over a thousand patents under his belt and a musical composer often revered for his "minimalist" tendencies, and deemed by many as one of the most influential composers of the 20th century. The result paints an aspiration for a band that seems to know what it is determined to accomplish; creative, intuitive music that pushes the mundane boundaries of mass media. *Time is Fiction* does exactly that. EDISON GLASS' sophomore album features many aspects of music that haven't yet been popularized but still resonate true and smooth. One of these interesting aspects is the complexity of having two singers in full voice on the album. This ground breaking revelation is rarely heard, or attempted by most bands. *Time is Fiction* is an album that strives to push the limit concerning creativity and experimentation. This is done while stylistically wrapping the music in a very beautiful package that illustrates perseverance, disbelief and fantasy; all the while keeping

the listener bewildered by the innocence of it all. (A. Scozia) (Credential Recordings/www.credentialrecordings.com)

EVERY AVENUE

Shh. Just Go With It CD

EVERY AVENUE plays pop rock much in the vein of FALL OUT BOY, except EVERY AVENUE does not suck nearly as much. Shh. Just Go With It, the band's debut album, shows a band with a lot of talent, especially a drummer that is able to...wait for it...keep time and create interesting beats, and a vocalist that is passionate and distinctive. The band avoids crazy time-signature changes for the most part, and only gets a bit pretentious on a few occasions. The first two-thirds of the album are noticeably stronger than the slow ending, however. Definitely not for the punks, but

EVERY AVENUE is definitely near the top of the radio-rock pack. (WMJ)
(Fearless/www.fearlessrecords.com)

FAKE PROBLEMS

Viking Wizard Eyes Wizard Full of Lies 7"

So, the band is offering all three tracks free of charge on the label website, but fans of the band should do themselves a favor

and just plunk down the \$5 for the vinyl. Aside from the track titles, the packaging contains a few BLINK 182 references, or tributes, if you will. Plus, for some reason (and I'm not a big vinyl-ophile) these tracks sound exceptionally good on three ol' turntable of yore—maybe it's the noodly guitar of 'Adam's Song'. 'Mutt' isn't as good as the aforementioned and 'Wendy Clear'. FAKE PROBLEMS' sound has changed a bit since *How Far Our Bodies Go*, especially with the also aforementioned guitar work, which has melded well with the band's No Idea-Gainesville background. New fans and old alike should enjoy this offering. (WMJ)
(Good Friends/www.goodfriendsrecords.com)

THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM

Senor and the Queen CD

THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM remains one of the best new bands around with a unique blend of blues, rock 'n' roll and punk energy. The four tracks on *Senor and the Queen* show a marked improvement in songwriting from the band's debut, *Sink or Swim*, which was already awesome. The Jersey quartet is quickly becoming leading candidate for heir to the Springsteen storytelling throne. The album's emotional range is wide with a title track full of pure energy and a conclusion of rustic emotion. If the upcoming full-length for *SideOneDummy* is anything like this, there may already be a candidate for album of the year. This band continues to amaze and live up to its underground reputation. (WMJ)
(Sabot Productions/www.sabotproductions.com)

GASLIGHT ANTHEM

Senor And The Queen EP

So I'm definitely a little late to this review party. It feels like this CD has been out forever, but hey, what the hell, another good review won't hurt, right? I honestly don't have a bad thing to say

about this band. I've heard people bitch and complain that they're just another AGAINST ME! I dunno, maybe it's just me, but I'm not hearing it. Yeah, it's a bit folk-punk, but it's definitely not anything like AM! Whenever I hear this band, I think to myself "so this is what it would be like if Matt Skiba still sang in a good band." Yeah, I said it – nothing the Trio has done in the past four years is worth shit. But I digress. The EP picks up right where the full length left off, delivering hit after hit. I could listen to these guys all day and not get sick of it at all. After this was released, it was announced that GASLIGHT ANTHEM had signed to Side One Dummy, which is great news for both parties. These dudes deserve to be pushed big time by a big label, and Side One can do that. The sky is the limit for these guys, no doubt. I'd be shocked if by the end of 2008 they weren't huge. (MWB)
(www.sabotproductions.net)

GIANT HAYSTACKS

Blunt Instrument CD

Aptly titled album here. Dissonant, jagged, angular guitar lines with percussive rhythms, and lots of space within their 2 minute songs. Comparisons that come to mind (which I am sure the band are completely tired of hearing) are GANG OF FOUR, a little FUGAZI, and some MINUTEMEN. This Bay Area band has the added interest of having a Scottish singer, which seems to fit their sound really well. At times their music almost has an improvisational feel to it. Fans of noisy, quirky, post-punk will like this one. (RK)
(Mistake Records/www.gianthaystacks.com)

GOOD RIDDANCE

Remain in Memory: The Final Show CD

GOOD RIDDANCE was awesome and now the band is no more. Those are the sad facts, but the band's kickass final show in Santa Cruz, Calif. sounds great due to the Blasting Room mixing and mastering. The quartet plays it's heart out with an incredible set list of 31 songs that (like the press release says) is basically a greatest hits compilation. Fans should enjoy this collection, and the performance makes it worthwhile for those that already own all the albums. GOOD RIDDANCE will be missed, and this disc is a testament to why they deserve to be. (WMJ)
(Fat Wreck Chords/www.fatwreck.com)

GOOD RIDDANCE

Remain in Memory CD

Coming in at 31 tracks, it's easy to dismiss *Remain in Memory*, GOOD RIDDANCE's live album, as overkill. But for an underdog band that made it almost 20 years, churning out good-to-great political rants, backed by solid punk rock only to be ignored by many outside of their native Southern California, 31 tracks almost seems like not enough for a band that's more than earned their place in punk rock history. Recorded on May 27, 2007, in their hometown of Santa Cruz, *Remain in Memory* marks the band's very last show together. Throughout their career, they were overshadowed by far less talented bands with bigger resources, but the guys in GOOD RIDDANCE, undaunted, continued to turn in album after album of passionate punk rock fight songs. Fueled by old BAD RELIGION and DEAD KENNEDY's albums, distorted guitars and a healthy dose of cynicism, GOOD RIDDANCE managed to put out eight albums before finally calling it quits. Lacking a greatest hits record, *Remain in Memory* is a perfect starter album for those just discovering the band and a nice keepsake for

longtime fans. (JBM)
(www.myspace.com/goodriddance)

HATEFUL MONDAY

The Last March Of The Ignorants CD

This Swiss band plays fast, tight, melodic punk with plenty of guitar lines that would be at home on the Fat Wreck Chords roster. Really good stuff here with elements of NO USE FOR A NAME, NRA, and a little J CHURCH. The song 'Nightmares' is extremely catchy and I've been playing it repeatedly since my first listen. Independently produced, the band asks that if you copy it for a friend to please copy the lyrics and cover as well. Good guys. (RK)
(GPS Prod/www.gpsprod.com)

IVORYLINE

There Came A Lion CD

There Came a Lion is an album that shows a distinct style of energetic, reflective rock. Jerry, the front-man, passionately shares his stories of anguish through his vibrant singing. His openness to the listener surely isn't meant to be fashionable, but rather a way to cope with life's hardships. The appropriately positioned and named last song on the album, 'The Last Words' vividly reveals Jeremy's pain of losing his father; quoting his father's last words to him, "love me, let me sleep." Don't get the wrong idea though, this is anything but a depressing album. Crunching guitars and rock anthems immediately shoot the listener with a heavy dosage of euphoria that doesn't seem to wear off. In between the plethora of anthems, we are reminded of the joys that melodic vocal and instrumental expressiveness does to music. In this case, it truly helps to define the mood that IVORYLINE is trying to convey to us. There Came a Lion is a highly reflective album that really seems to put a lot in perspective as well as providing songs that prove to be addicting. (A. Scozia)
(Tooth And Nail Records/www.toothandnail.com)

LOOK BACK AND LAUGH

State of Illusion CD

Thrashing hardcore from this band out of Oakland, California. This disc gathers their songs off the original State of Illusion EP, the Street Terrorism EP, and their split with DROPDEAD. Good stuff here. I prefer the Street Terrorism EP the best with its title track and 'Step Forward' being my faves. Musically I guess you could compare them to SIEGE or DROPDEAD. Though their name is obviously a reference to the MINOR THREAT song you won't really hear Ian and company in their sound. Straight ahead hardcore thrash featuring female vocals and former members of DEAD AND GONE, DESTROY and YAPHET KOTTO. (RK)
(self-released CD/www.lookbackandlaugh.net)

MILLENCOLIN

Machine 15 CD

I got into MILLENCOLIN after playing the first Tony Hawk Pro skater game. 'No Cigar' stuck out as one of the coolest songs in that game and I was hooked. Not a whole lot has changed with the band's sound since those days, but, sad to say, the little that has changed has caused my interest in the band to wane. The band still has a bit of a BAD RELIGION vibe (listen: 'Ducks & Drakes') mixed with a weird type of pop. The songs on Machine 15 are just not that interesting though. 'Machine 15' sticks out the most, but it is little more than a catchy chorus. MILLENCOLIN does little to impress this 'No Cigar'-era fan. (WMJ)
(Epitaph/www.epitaph.com)

CHRIS MILLS

Living in the Aftermath CD

Ok, so first off, this definitely isn't something that you'd normally read about in AMP, and it might not strike the fancy of 90% of our target audience, but hell, they're not listening to it. I am. And I'm a fan. Traditional Southern soul, mixed with rock, and stripped down to something unique and amazing. Definitely not what I expected given the packaging, which looks like a 1940s comic book. I honestly can't even compare or classify this release. It definitely has a fair dose of pop sensibility, but it's got these violins, farfisa, and cellos thrown in that just throw me all off track. I don't give a shit what you call it or who you compare it to, it's just a damn fine release by, what I've now come to realize, one of the most talented songwriters living in America today. (MWB)
(www.ernestjenning.com)

THE MOONEY SUZUKI

CBGB OMFUG Masters: Live June 29, 2001 CD

THE MOONEY SUZUKI's high energy blend of garage rock and British rock 'n' roll is captured almost perfectly from the sound board of a live performance at CBGB in 2001. A great set list, just enough banter between tracks and a stellar performance make this a great live album to own for fans of the band. It's also a great addition to the very cool CBGB live series by MVD. (WMJ)
(MVD Audio/www.mvdaudio.com)



THE MORNING LIGHT

The Sounds of Love EP CD

THE MORNING LIGHT is definitely a Fearless band (you know the type), despite a suspiciously decent sound that fails to annoy as much as most of the band's label brethren. The band writes and plays sweet melodies over the course of this six-track EP, but they do it in a way that calls to mind bands like THE FORMAT more than HELLOGOODBYE. Still, it is all a bit formulaic and lacks any variation from track to track. THE MORNING LIGHT doesn't bring much new to the indie-powerpop scene and have a little too much of the soft vocal polish that ruins bands like this, but it could be a hell of a lot worse. THE MORNING LIGHT, combined with a few other recent releases, is starting to make me realize I almost hate Drive-Thru more than Fearless nowadays...almost. Punk Goes Crunk, anyone? (WMJ)
(Fearless/www.fearlessrecords.com)

NERF HERDER

I didn't really like these guys the first time around, and I'm no more a fan this time. I mean, they're not bad, they're just nothing new. I'd much rather listen to SCREECHING WEASEL, MR. T EXPERIENCE, or THE QUEERS than NERF HERDER. Just the name is embarrassing - Star Wars quote or not. Hell, if

kids are still interested in this band and they're doing well on their return, the more power to them. I just can't imagine a marginal band 10 years ago being anything more than a marginal band now. (MWB)
(www.oglio.com)

NO USE FOR A NAME

Feel Good Record of the Year CD

NO USE FOR A NAME is one of the few melodic skate-punk bands still around in the waning genre, which is why it's unfortunate that it seems like they are turning into a band still worth seeing live but not a band to get excited about when a new album is released. Feel Good Record of the Year has a few good tracks in the first half, but overall, Tony Sly's usually stellar writing seems a bit uninspired this time around, though still well-crafted, and some of the arrangements border on boring. NUFAN is a band that still shows plenty of energy and brilliance live, but even Bill Stevenson could not seem to capture that for the band's latest effort. It is by no means a bad album (there are much, much worse in today's scene), but it is a forgettable NUFAN affair. (WMJ)
(Fat Wreck Chords/www.fatwreck.com)

NO USE FOR A NAME

The Feel Good Record of the Year CD

While not quite living up to its tongue-in-cheek title, the latest NUFAN album is a very pleasant listen nonetheless. It has all the trademark qualities that you've come to expect from these long running members of the Fat roster: super tight vocal harmonies, punchy guitar parts and catchy tunes. The band throw in a few twists to keep things interesting like the acoustic number

'Sleeping Between Trucks' and the piano ballad 'Ontario' which sounds like a cross between QUEEN and JETS TO BRAZIL! Best song title award goes to 'Night of the Living Living'. All in all this is a really good disc. Not as good as their pinnacle release Leche Con Carne but still REALLY good. "Sheesh. Must you always compare every NUFAN album to Leche Con Carne?"... Yes. Yes, I must. (RK)
(Fat Wreck Chords/www.fatwreck.com)

NO USE FOR A NAME

The Feel Good Record Of The Year CD

While there's no way this is the feel-good record of the year for REAL, it's pretty good. I've never been a real big fan of NUFAN, but then again I was never really into much of the mid-90s Fat Wreck scene. But I don't care who you are, or what you like - if there's a band out there who's put out continually solid records, even if they're not your cup of tea, for 15+ years, they deserve your respect. So, having said that, I've got a lot of respect for this band, and for this release, which is by far their best disc of the past decade. To me, it seems like something that NUFAN could have released without raising an eyebrow back in the late 90s - kind of a return to former glories, if you will. While there are a few clunkers on there, it's got some really solid songs, and might return NUFAN to prominence among this latest generation of Cali-punk kids. (MWB)
(www.fatwreck.com)

DAVID ROVICS**The Commons CD**

David Rovics has been doing the one man and his guitar and a brain and a conscience for over a decade now. He's probably done a dozen records too. Think Woody Guthrie, Phil Ochs, Pete Seeger. Yup, he's that relevant. That topical. That good. This live record is a greatest hits of sorts, culled from his last half dozen records, largely taken from this century. Some exquisite banjo playing and female backing vocals add a texture which only serve to highlight how smart, catchy, poignant and rousing his songs actually are. Absolutely essential. (RK)

(Irregular Records/www.irregularrecords.co.uk)

SAY HELLO TO THE ANGELS**Self Titled CD**

Melodic and driving post-punk from these former RIDDLIN' KIDS members, SAY HELLO TO THE ANGELS have the makings of a lengthy career in their own right if this debut EP is any indication. 'Freedom Ring' has an anthemic chorus that feels right at home alongside the best of ALL, while 'Never Walk Alone' has that same scene-rally feel as BOUNCING SOULS' 'True Believers'. I'm not crazy about the song 'Girl', which feels a bit out of place and sappy within the confines of the rest of the album. But overall this EP delivers. (Danielle Torrence)

(Rice and Beans Music)

BETTINA SCHELKER**The Honeymoon Is Over CD**

BS is a bit of a phenomenon. World class boxer. Music and sports school founder and director. And an accomplished singer/songwriter in three languages. This is her 4th release, with a preponderance of the songs in English. It's a folk record, in terms of instrumentation, and style (primarily acoustic guitar and voice), with CHUMBAWAMBA producing and adding, at times, further layers of sound. An out lesbian, a strong anti-homophobia message runs throughout this disc, but there's passion, tenderness, compassion, and righteous anger in equal measure. Like Ani DiFranco, Schelker has her own label (Foundagirl - which means the catalog numbers are, of course, FAG 001, etc!). The songwriting, and performance on this are immaculate, and a fragile beauty is underscored with an undeniable power and strength. Not whiny. Not petulant. Pure class. (RK)

(www.foundagirl.com)

STORY OF THE YEAR**The Black Swan CD**

Now that the scream-o genre is finally, and rightfully, being tossed on the sonic landfill to spend eternity resting somewhere between swing bands and third-wave ska, the groups that used to bloody their throats every night to be heard above the distorted guitars are suddenly realizing they are about as relevant as a nu-metal cover band. Thankfully, St. Louis-based STORY OF THE YEAR never fully committed to the scream-o genre. On Black Swan, their third full length and first for punk rock stalwart Epitaph Records, they have pretty much slid into a comfortable track of writing strong melodic punk rock songs with a handful of potential anthems-in-waiting. It's almost a cliché to point out maturity on a band's third outing, but solid songs like 'Wake Up' and the more restrained 'Angel in the Swamp' show a

band confident in their playing. There are a couple of missteps along the way, like the album opener 'Choose Your Fate', which shows the band trying to get a few more screams out of their system. Ultimately Black Swan finds SOTY more concerned with having a career than simply serving as a footnote in music history. (JBM)

(www.storyoftheyear.net)

TERROR**CBGB OMFUG Masters: Live June 10, 2004 CD**

TERROR is what it is. Listeners in the mood for a bro-down will likely eat this live album up, others, maybe not so much. TERROR rips through 11 tracks of formidable LA-hardcore, but listeners will either be a fan of Scott Vogel's 'Vogelisms' or they won't. Ramblings about "positive aggression" and lines like "word the fuck up" get old, in this reviewer's opinion. And this is definitely breakdown-laden hardcore. Great sound recording and an energetic set should score points with TERROR fans, but will do little else for the casual hardcore fan. (WMJ)

(MVD Audio / www.mvdaudio.com)

THAT WAS SOMETHING**Bears! CD**

Bears! The debut album from Detroit's THAT WAS SOMETHING demands attention with 11 tracks of pop-indie greatness that is well-written and does not bring with it the pretentiousness often associated with indie rock. Every single track is fun and feels fresh. This album never gets boring and even the foldout artwork reeks of awesome. This is not one to pass up. (WMJ)

(Oort/www.oortrecords.com)

THE TOASTERS**CBGB OMFUG Masters: Live June 28, 2002 CD**

THE TOASTERS are the longest running American ska band and probably still the best live. So it is no wonder that a collection of eleven live TOASTERS tracks from the sound board master recordings at famed New York venue CBGB kicks ass. THE TOASTERS offer a great set list, returning to the venue 15 years after the band first played there. The banter goes a bit long at times, but this is still the best edition to the CBGB live series yet. (WMJ)

(MVD Audio/www.mvdaudio.com)

THE T4 PROJECT**Story-Based Concept Album CD**

Wow...where to begin. I don't think this is the kind of thing you can really judge by a review, it's more something you need to experience. To try and sum it up, a ton of people from punk bands all over the world get together and record a story-based concept album, with each song dealing with a different topic, having a different piece of art, a different introduction, and a different band. Pretty crazy shit, right? Artists include, just to name a few, Fletcher from PENNYWISE, Greg Hetson from CIRCLE JERKS and BAD RELIGION, Kirsten Patches from NAKED AGGRESSION, and Jason Cruz from STRUNG OUT. Also included for backing vocals is the Ventura College Choir. Pretty crazy, right? It's a pretty ambitious undertaking, and honestly, a pretty rad piece of art. Because that's really what it is, a piece of art. This is something you don't listen to, you don't understand from a review, but something you should experience on your own. (MWB)

(www.mentalrecords.com)

BOOK CORNER

Do Travel Writers Go to Hell?

A Swashbuckling Tale of High Adventures, Questionable Ethics & Professional Hedonism

**DO TRAVEL WRITERS GO TO HELL?**

By Thomas Kohnstamm

Ever looked at a Lonely Planet travel guide and assumed the author was smoking something? Well, chances are he/she was, if even half of Thomas Kohnstamm's memoir of life as a travel writer is true. Fed up with his life as a New York City office drone, Kohnstamm lost his girlfriend and apartment on his quest to be a travel writer in early 2004. The appeal of Do Travel Writers Go to Hell? lies in his knack for telling a good story and his often extreme candor about one night stands with prostitutes and flight attendants to his inept side job as a drug dealer. Facing nearly impossible deadlines and constant power outages, all for a pittance of a paycheck at the end of the job, Kohnstamm almost gives up on his quest to update a copy of Lonely Planet Brazil before stumbling on the travel writer's holy grail - an online community of veteran writers who show him the short cuts and open his eyes to everything from free meals to free hotel rooms. Tossing in everything from cultural customs to genuinely helpful travel tips along the way, Do Travel Writers Go to Hell? actually seconds as pretty useful travel guide, though one that's far more entertaining than anything Lonely Planet ever put out. (JBM)

(www.thomaskohnstamm.com)

SHOOTING WAR

By Anthony Lappe; Illustrated by Dan Goldman

In Shooting War, the fantastic new graphic novel from Anthony Lappe and Dan Goldman, the author brings to life a story in the not-to-distant future of a Brooklyn videoblogger who happens to capture the only footage of a terrorist bombing at a NY Starbucks. The footage nets Jimmy Burns, a post-Katrina-esque Anderson Cooper fan base and a new job with a major news organization to cover the on-going Iraq war. In his new role as a citizen journalist, Burns is immediately thrown into the war zone, way over his head, stalked by Iraqi terrorists and quite possibly the CIA. The illustrations in Shooting War are sharp and complement the fast-paced story brilliantly. Lappe clearly draws on a lot of his own experiences as an executive editor of GNN.tv, the website for the Guerrilla News Network. By far, one of the best fictional takes on the Iraq war so far. (JBM)

(www.shootingwar.com)

TIN ARMOR WOAH OH EP 7"

First off, I'm a big fan of the 7" that allow you download the digital versions of the songs, also. Because while I'm as pro-vinyl as the next guy, I'm also very pro-iPod. So to get to download this was a real treat. So aside from that little surprise, this record is awesome. It reminds me of THE ERGS! meet BAYSIDE meets BILLY BRAGG, as weird as that mix is. It reminds me of something straight from 1996, and that is definitely a good thing. Let's just say in the past 10 minutes, I went from not knowing who the hell TIN ARMOR was to being in love with TIN ARMOR, you dig? This is just some damn well written songs, well performed, with great vocals. Excellent, stripped-down songs. I can't get enough! (MWB)

(www.woahohrecords.com)

TRANSIT

This Will Not Define Us CD

Mass strikes again! Yeah, I'm from Mass, so any Mass band that does well I'm happy for. So these dudes aren't reinventing the wheel or anything, by any stretch. But it ain't too shabby. Some songs are better than others, but seeing as this is their first full length, that's to be expected. They strike me as the kinda band that's gonna get better and better with each effort. Some of the songs are a bit slower, and not that they're bad, they're still solid songs - I just think these guys are

at their best when they're upping the pace a bit. It's a strong dose of FAIRWEATHER, with some HOT WATER MUSIC thrown in for good measure. Real good, real promising pop-core. I definitely look forward to hearing more from these guys in the future. (MWB)

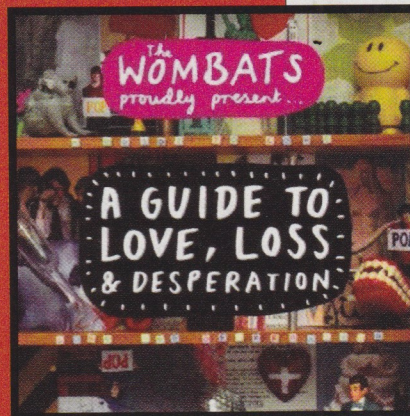
(www.myspace.com/barrettrecords)

THE WOMBATS

Proudly Presents...A Guide To Love, Loss, & Desperation CD

Of course when I saw the title "Let's Dance To Joy Division," I had to hear the song.

Jangly guitars, with an indie rock post-punk disco groove, and sing-a-long melodies, I was hooked. Instantaneously catchy, fun, and with a touch of witty anecdotal humor (This is my first wedding and I hope it is my last / Things would be fantastic if me and the bride didn't have a past / So I stand by the buffet and submerge myself in brie /



I'm tactically positioned / Yeah because the bar is near and the champagne's for free), "A Guide To..." struck me as a modern musical version of an 80s John Hughes film (Weird Science, Pretty In Pink, Some Kind Of Wonderful, etc.), where the protagonist was a young Robert Smith trying to get the girl. The Wombats are easily one of my favorites of the year. Also check out their videos online at youtube.com (search it!) and on www.myspace.com/thewombatsuk. (JJ)

(Roadrunner Records/www.roadrunnerrecords.com/artists/TheWombats)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Music By People Who Drink Cider in the Gutter CD

This 20 track compilation of punk and ska bands is actually quite good. Despite the fact that while I used to drink cider 27 years or so ago now, I never did it in the gutter! From the ENABLERS/ DRAGONS rockin' sound of The GREAT ST. LOUIS, to the ska-punk stylings of HARIJAN, to the anthemic street-punk of DEATH BY DECIBELS this disc is well-rounded. Thematically there are a bunch of songs about booze/drinking plus others on, well, a bunch of different stuff. Compilations

are really hit and miss with me, but this one

CATALOG HEAVEN:

What's RED SCARE been up to this year!



THE COPYRIGHTS

Learn the Hard Way CD

Pop punk out of Carbondale, Illinois. Upon first listen I thought this CD was so-so, but after another couple of spins I realized it was damn

catchy! Recorded in pop punk's hallowed halls of the Sonic Iguana Studios, this disc has a great sound. All the instruments are fat and clear and the vocals are big with lots of tight harmonies. Musical reference points would be THE METHADONES, LILLINGTONS, TEEN IDOLS, and maybe a little bit of The LOVED ONES. Pretty original lyrics for a genre which is often loaded with clichéd themes. 'Two Left Feet' and 'Out of Ideas' rule on this disc but it's all pretty strong and kinda interconnected. As far as I know this is THE COPYRIGHTS' 2nd full length on Red Scare and you should check it out. (RK)

(Red Scare Records/www.redscare.net)

THE COPYRIGHTS

Learn the Hard Way CD

After the radio explosion of pop-punk bands in the early 90s, the genre was left in an awkward state when it phased out of the mainstream. The catchy pop-punk newcomers turned to emo and silly FALL OUT BOY-style garbage. BLINK 182 broke up and it's members turned to indie rock, while GREEN DAY took their sound to an entirely new level. Mainstays like THE QUEERS

have stayed the course, but good new pop-punkers are more of a rarity these days. Yet,

Red Scare has signed a number of quality acts, such as TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET and Carbondale, Illinois' THE COPYRIGHTS. The former has followed in the footsteps of the RAMONES, while the latter has taken the more aggressive path of bands like SCREECHING WEASEL. Learn the Hard Way, the band's second Red Scare release, is easily the best of THE COPYRIGHTS' career. With 14 tracks in 25 minutes, the band will

rip your face off as much as it will beg you to sing along. Self-produced and far from mainstream, Learn the Hard Way is one of the best pop-punk albums of the last decade. If you haven't heard of THE COPYRIGHTS, it's time to start paying attention. (The album artwork and liner notes are also very cool.) (WMJ)

(Red Scare Records/www.redscare.net)

LA PLEBE

Hasta La Muerte! CD

I hadn't heard anything from LA PLEBE for awhile and while I remember them being good, I don't remember them being THIS good.



definitely hits more than it misses. Worth your investigation. (RK)
(TNS Records/www.myspace.com/
thatsnotskankingrecords)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Not In Our Name: Singing Out About The Wars In Iraq And Afghanistan CD

The current generation of punkers gone acoustic typically reference 'old school' influences - Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs. With good reason. The old school folkies weren't afraid to write about what was going on. Take a stand. Keep it real. Pretty punk really. For the last 30 years (and more in some cases) of course, while unheralded in terms of popularity, folk musicians have still been writing 'topical' songs, protesting, fighting, presenting a reality you won't find in the corporate media. Here's a collection of some of the greats doing what they do best. Giants from the USA, UK and Australia. This is the place to check out what 'real' folk music actually sounds like - Leon Rosselson, Jez Lowe, David Rovics, EMMA'S REVOLUTION, Dick Gaughan, Roy Bailey, Robb Johnson, Eliza Gilkyson, Jim Page, Rory McLeod, David Ferrard and more. A stellar line-up. And a considerably better place to check out real 'acoustic' music than utter dreck like Punk Goes Acoustic. A benefit for the UK Stop The War' Coalition. But the quality and class of the songs is what carries this. (RK)
(www.songsforchange.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

No Place To Call Home CD

This compilation reminds me of the way comps used to be put together. The format is definitely punk but has many different sub-genres represented: from straight-ahead punk, to hardcore, to pop-punk. This is an international compilation with 33 bands from 10 different countries. The recording quality does vary from band to band but most tracks sound pretty good. Stand outs for me were the poppier sounds of the PLASTIC STARS from Florida, the catchy hardcore of THALIDOMIDE from Prague, and a Polish ode to the RAMONES by DAMROCKERS. If you're looking to find some new bands from around the world this comp out of the Czech Republic should help you. (RK)
(Bad Dream Records/www.myspace.com/baddreamrec)

VULTURES UNITED

Dirt Hearts EP

Every time VULTURES UNITED releases another song, it gives me a reason to not hate music. In a day and age when being the same is celebrated rather than rallied against, in a time when sounding like everyone else makes you money but robs you of self respect, VULTURES UNITED is a reminder that there is still some truly, honest, passionate people in bands. When I first heard them a few years back, going by a different, much longer name, I was blown away. It was like someone had kicked me in the gut and knocked the wind out; I was sold. Here we are, some years

later, and these dudes continue to deliver the punishing hardcore punk rock like nobody else. The anger in Jordan's voice is second to none, and the intensity in the music is unmistakable. If the music doesn't make you angry, you're dead. And if the fact that this is an EP doesn't make you even more angry, you're fucked. Give me a full length already!! (MWB)
(www.thepiraterecordcompany.com)

THE YOUNG WEREWOLVES

Cheat The Devil CD

The CD kinda falls into the horror punk/psychobilly genre and kinda doesn't at the same time. It starts off pretty solid with the first few tracks. They have a sound that is a mix of THE HIVES, THE CRAMPS, and early rockabilly. If the band had a bit more dirt to their sound I could see THE YOUNG WEREWOLVES fitting well into the Gearhead Records roster. Their lyrics are rather typical for the aforementioned genre. Towards the middle, the album begins to sag with a couple of really weak tunes both lyrically and musically ('Gala Monster Party' and 'Satan's Daughter') but thankfully it picks back up and finishes strong. Good male/female dual vocalists add a lot to their sound (see 'Touched By a Demon' and 'Run Away'). The unlisted final track is an absolutely smashing cover of DURAN DURAN's 'Hungry Like The Wolf'. I wish the rest of the album had the intensity found in this cover. Still a good disc. Fans of horror punk/psychobilly crossover should enjoy this. (RK)
(self-Released CD/www.theyoungwerewolves.com) 

Hasta la Muerte is a great CD. LA PLEBE plays fast-paced catchy punk (bordering on melodic hardcore) with the addition of horns. And, yeah, although I said "punk with horns" this is NOT ska-punk. The horns are used with much more of a Latin flair. Not just filling out and supporting the guitar chords but often weaving in and around them. The vocals are bi-lingual with the majority being sung in Spanish. Don't fret; the lyric sheet has both English and Spanish translations. The sing-along street punk quality of 'Plebe Por Vida' is my favorite track but this disc smokes from beginning to end. Ya know, if ADRENALIN O.D. had a Latino horn section, sung in Spanish, and replaced their zaniness with a frustrated and angry passion they might've sounded like LA PLEBE... or not. (RK)
(Red Scare Records/www.redscare.net)

THE METHADONES

This Won't Hurt... CD

Let me start off by saying that I love THE METHADONES. I think their past couple of albums were brilliant and they helped ease me through some rough times. While This Won't Hurt... has some great songs many of them are marred by annoying vocal effects. Either intentionally or not the electronic pitch correction-like effect used ends up sounding

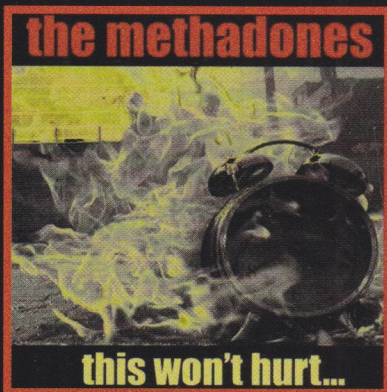
like a frickin' vocoder. I wish I could give this release a huge thumbs up (maybe these effects would be less irritating to someone less obsessive than I) but I can only say it's a good CD, but a few notches below their last few efforts. The track 'Starting Line' is still pure melancholy pop punk bliss in true METHADONES style. Seriously guys, please leave these effects to the Cher dance club mixes... you're breaking my fucking heart. Don't worry; I still love you. (RK)
(Red Scare Records/www.redscare.net)

THE SIDEKICKS

So Long, Soggy Dog CD

Not being familiar with THE SIDEKICKS I really enjoyed discovering this Ohio quartet's CD.

Great sandpaper vocals singing heartfelt lines, nice guitar work and unusual song structures. Think JAWBREAKER, think AMERICAN STEEL, think LAWRENCE ARMS. Think none of these, because while being reminiscent of those bands THE SIDEKICKS still manage to create a distinctly moving sound and feel of their own. The two tracks that lead off the album are absolutely stellar. While those two are my favorite this CD stays pretty solid to the end. Recommended. (RK)
(Red Scare Records/www.redscare.net)



THE SIDEKICKS

So Long, Soggy Dog CD

A band this young should not sound so fucking good. THE SIDEKICKS deliver a Midwest punk sound that shames many bands years their senior. It is equal parts beer-soaked, coarse punk a la THE LAWRENCE ARMS and equal parts bearded, Gainesville, No Idea folk punk. It's all parts kickass. This is the type of band that allows you to get in a pit full of men in flannel and/or band t-shirts or shirtless, get drenched in sweat, soaked in cheap, watered-down beer and not feel the least bit gay about it. You'll go home looking like a hobo, but you'd do it again, and again, and again, because this band is that damn good. (WMU)
(Red Scare Records/www.redscare.net)

TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET

Warning Device CD

Great stuff here from Kody of The LILLINGTONS and crew. Kody and TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET are to THE LILLINGTONS what Vapid and THE METHADONES are to SCREECHING WEASEL (What is this... a CD review or the answer to a friggin' SAT question?). Super catchy pop punk/RAMONES-core/whatever you wanna call it throughout. I've always liked Kody's distinctive vocal delivery, quite original for the genre. The title track along with 'She's Not The One' and 'Wasting Time'

have already dug deep into my brain after only two listens. Another winner from Red Scare. (RK)
(Red Scare Records www.redscare.net)



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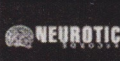
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7/08 - EL PASO, TX @ CLUB 101
7/09 - ALBUQUERQUE, NM @ SUNSHINE THEATRE
7/10 - PHOENIX, AZ @ MARQUEE THEATRE
7/11 - LOS ANGELES, CA @ HOUSE OF BLUES
7/12 - BAKERSFIELD, CA @ THE DOME
7/13 - SAN DIEGO, CA @ SOMA
7/15 - SAN FRANCISCO, CA @ THE FILLMORE

7/17 - PORTLAND, OR @ HAWTHORNE THEATRE
7/18 - SEATTLE, WA @ STUDIO SEVEN
7/19 - SPOKANE, WA @ THE BIG EASY
7/20 - BOISE, ID @ THE BIG EASY
7/21 - SALT LAKE CITY, UT @ AVALON THEATRE
7/23 - DENVER, CO @ CERVANTES BALLROOM
7/24 - OMAHA, NE @ SOKOL UNDERGROUND
7/25 - MINNEAPOLIS, MN @ FIRST AVENUE
7/26 - MILWAUKEE, WI @ THE RAVE
7/27 - ST. LOUIS, MO @ POP'S
7/28 - CHICAGO, IL @ HOUSE OF BLUES

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FOREVER WINGS FOLD

Un-Signed! Band Spotlight



GOOD GUYS IN BLACK

INTERVIEW WITH PRO BMXER/TV HOST RICK THORNE

By Brandon Evans

"You've got to know your limitations. I don't know what your limitations are. I found out what mine were when I was twelve. I found out that there weren't too many limitations, if I did it my way." – Johnny Cash

Who the hell are Good Guys In Black and what are they all about?

The Good Guys In Black are myself (Rick Thorne), Alan Vega, Nick Stagnaro and Frank Zummo from Street Drum Corps. Basically I came up with the name and it was an extension of what I call myself already. I call myself the Biker in Black, it's just my thing...I love black. The name of the band stands for being misrepresented or misunderstood your whole life based on the way you look or the way you think. You may look a certain way, or people may feel a certain way about you, but in your heart you've got good. That's basically what Good Guys in Black stands for. It's like taking a negative situation and making them positive to better your life. I got the idea from "Good Guys Wear Black" from Chuck Norris (laughs) but somebody already had that name and Good Guys In Black worked so I was like, "Hell yeah!" I've been misunderstood my whole life and I've been fighting society, but in my heart I'm a good dude and I want people to maybe look at something that I've been through and maybe better themselves.

Let's say that you started the band a

decade ago instead of now. Do you think the band would have the same energy and be as serious if it was formed 10 years ago?

Yeah I think so. This was actually something I've wanted to do since I was 18 to be quite honest with you. Growing up listening to punk rock and hip hop, I was really into the hard core scene for a long, long time. Some of my favorite bands are Verbal Assault and Government Issue. I don't know if people know those bands nowadays, but they should check them out. Bands like Fugazi and Minor Threat, these were bands that seemed real because they always had something real to say and they wanted to be taken serious.

When I first saw Good Guys In Black you were opening up for Pennywise at The Casbah in San Diego. How did you guys set that up?

(Laughs) I've known Pennywise and those guys for quite some time. I've known them ever since we started doing Warped Tour back in like '96. I've toured the world with them and I interviewed them for TV back in the day when I was doing stuff for ESPN and we've always


had a good click.

It is quite hard to cross over and be an athlete and start a band. People will always be like, "Here is another athlete trying to do this or yada-yada!" There is a difference with me and Good Guys In Black because this has been dormant. Byron was shocked and Jim was like, "Dude, why are you hiding your talent? We want to do more shows with you!" I was just so complimented that they would want us to play that! Byron really liked the song Something More Than You and he wanted us to play with them. That was all Byron's doing. He was so generous and he said, "Hey we want to give you guys a shot!" I was stoked because to me, I had been watching those guys play for years and to actually play with them was like a really big deal for me. That's how that came about. They really had our back and liked our music so that's what makes me feel good about it. I don't feel like I'm getting charity handouts from people I know because we are a good show and we're a good band, the music is good and we've got something good to say. If I felt like I was just bullshitting around and being like, "Hey look at me, the athlete being in a band and I suck," I wouldn't do it...there is no way! So forever thanks to Pennywise!

It's rumored that Good Guys In Black will be involved on a bunch of different tours this year. What can we expect to see from you guys this summer and in the future?

The main thing that we are doing this summer is the Warped Tour for Monster. I've put together my own action sports show with music and we're going to play on the deck of the ramp and it's called The Rick Thorne Experience. Another thing that we are going to be doing for Monster is the DUB Tour and for Boost Mobile we are going to be doing Hot Import Nights and the Night Shift Tour. It's going to be different days (not the whole thing) because of overlapping. The big one is going to be Warped Tour. I'm so pumped that Monster is going to be backing us into it. It's really going to help us out as a band and I've had a big drive to get Action Sports crackin' again on Warped Tour because for the last few years it's been really weak. What I want to do is have a set, choreographed show with top pros. You get these big time guys out there and they fly under the radar and I felt that that's gone on long enough. I thought they needed to be showcased just like the bands. Monster went for my idea and they're into it and they're feelin' it and it looks like on June 14th we're going to be starting in Pomona. I've been doing that tour for 11 years as an athlete only so it's a dream for me to play and ride. It's something that I've wanted to do since I was a kid and I just followed the formula of being sponsored in BMX.

Is there anything that you want to add before we wrap things up?

Thanks to AMP for the interest and if there are any kids out there that want to check us out, hit up our MySpace and come and see us on tour soon! 

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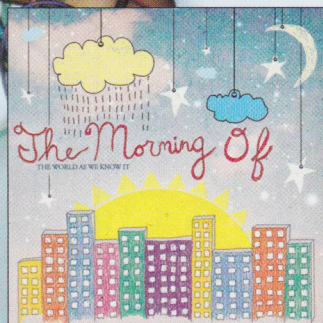


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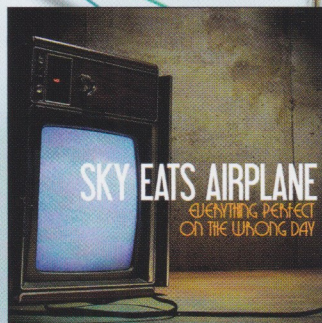
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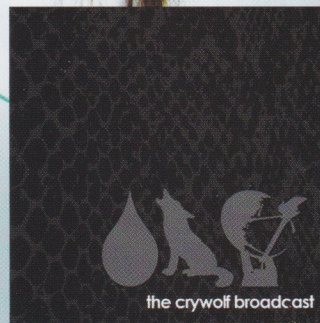
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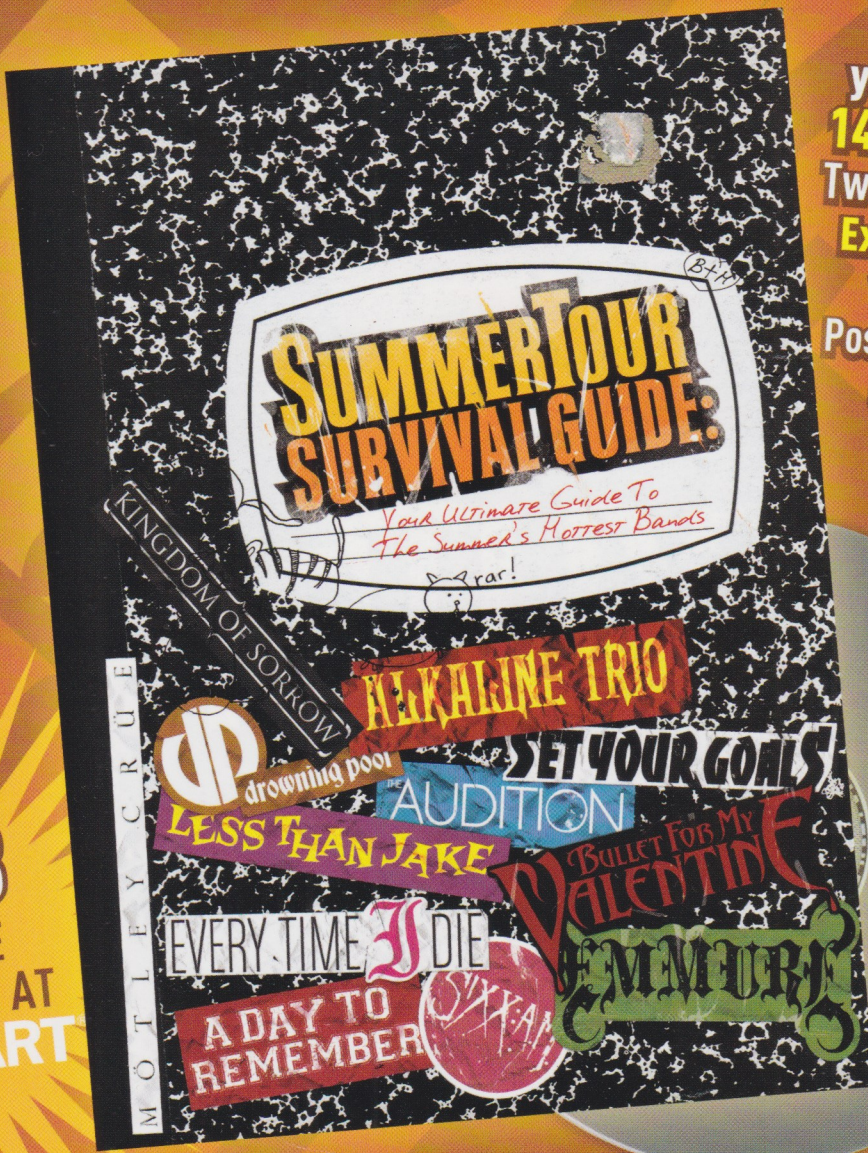
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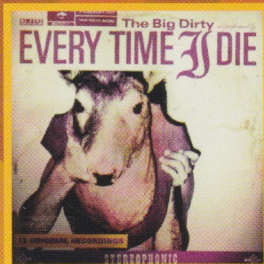
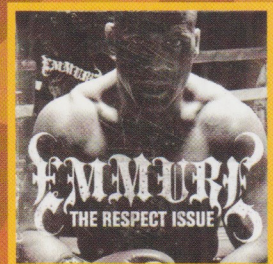
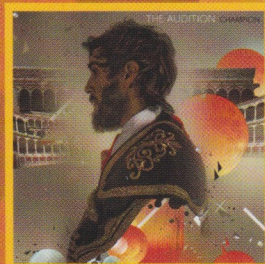
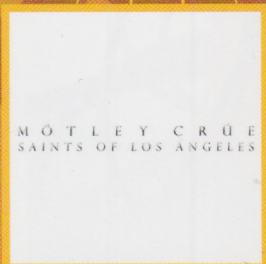
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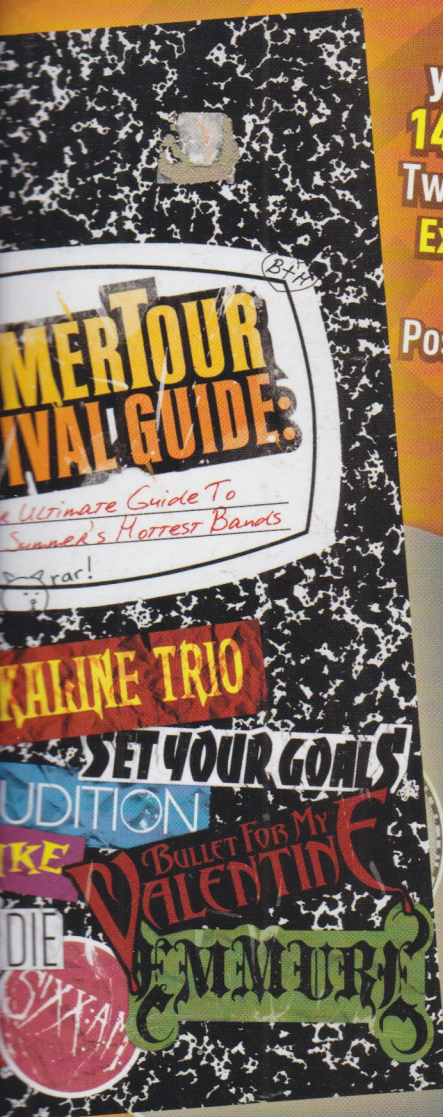
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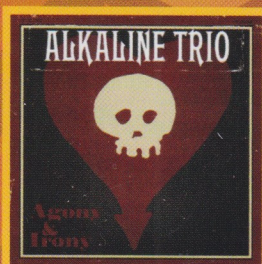
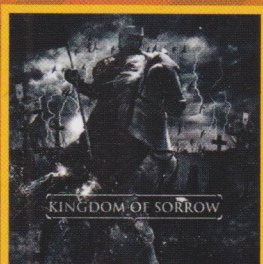
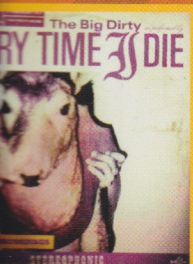
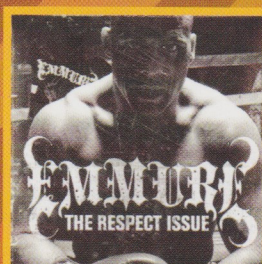
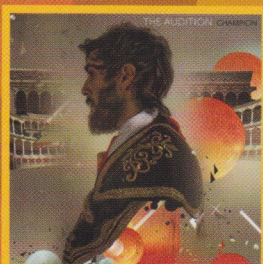
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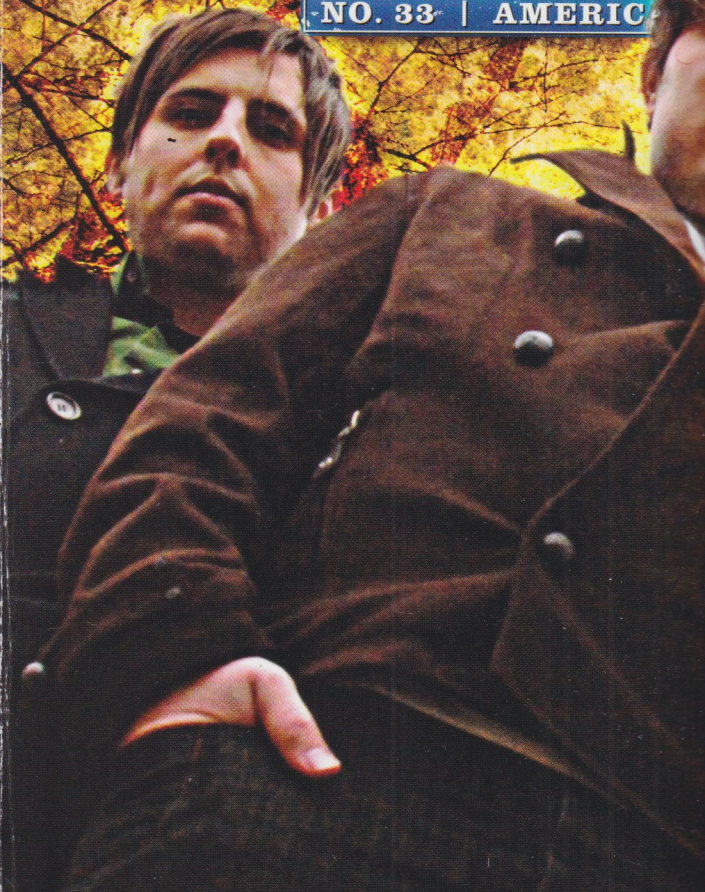
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